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A MIGHTY MEANS OF USEFULNESS

JAMES G. K. McCLURE

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INTERCESSORY PRAYER

A Mighty Means of Usefulness

By

Rev. James G. K. McClure, D. D.

CHICAGO
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Introductory Note.

The purpose of this book is to exalt the power and serviceableness of Intercessory Prayer. Many Christian workers lead such busy lives, every hour being claimed for speaking, visiting, studying or the like, that their minds, absorbed in such duties, are in danger of minimizing the sacred and important duty of Intercession.

I earnestly hope that this book will remind every reader of a mighty means of usefulness that is available to us all. I believe that sustained Intercessory Prayer will hasten the day of Christ's glory—that such Intercessory Prayer is one of the largest needs of our time. If the reader of these pages will give himself anew to Intercessory Prayer, making such Intercession the very heart of his Christian activity, these pages will have accomplished their purpose.

JAMES G. K. MCCLURE.

Lake Forest, Ill.

The Mighty Ministry of Intercession.

One of the mightiest instrumentalities for the world's advance is intercessory prayer—prayer for others. Some souls have realized this fact. One such was Samuel. He was much like our Washington, a wise, practical leader, who had great forethought and who secured large results.

All through his busy public career, while he was trying to reform and elevate Israel, he prayed for Israel. He laid proper emphasis on instruction and administration: the principles that he taught were the soundest, and the deeds of his official leadership were flawless. But he believed that his full usefulness to his fellow men and his full devotion to God were not accomplished until he had prayed to God to bless men.

To Samuel it was a "sin against the Lord" not to pray for others. In one of the most remarkable addresses in all history, an address that reminds us of Washington's Farewell Address, delivered as he was retiring from public leadership, Samuel so

designated failure to pray for others—a "sin against the Lord." At a moment that was in many respects the consummate moment of his life, a life eminently judicious, pure and beneficial, he declared that though he ceased to exercise the functions of official leadership, one thing he would not cease to do—pray for Israel; for to cease doing that would be a sin.

Some such startling assertion seems necessary to arouse our attention to the wondrous power for God's glory and for human good that there is in intercessory prayer. It, too, as well as prophetic teaching and public leadership, may be a mighty ministry of usefulness.

An incident in English history illustrates this ministry. Henry VIII. was king of England. William Tyndale, a scholar, wished to translate the Greek New Testament into English, so that the English people could have God's word in their own tongue. The king and church alike refused to allow such a translation. There was not a spot in England where Tyndale was safe to carry out his project. So he went to the Continent. There he labored, under stress and difficulties. He made his translation. He sent it over to England. The authorities burned it. Still he kept at his work,

perfecting the translation. Enemies dogged his footsteps. He was deceived, betrayed, imprisoned, and at last burned to death. His dying words were a prayer—a prayer of intercession: "Oh, Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"

Little did it seem as though that prayer would be answered. The king was set against the circulation of the Bible and there was no indication whatever that he would change his mind. But that true prayer of intercession had been offered. All unselfishly Tyndale had prayed that the king's eyes might be so opened that he would see what a blessing the English Bible would be to the English people, and would desire the people to have that Bible. The prayer was answered! In a little time Henry VIII. saw the Bible in an entirely new light. Instead of persecuting those who favored its translation he helped them. He even gave his royal sanction to the issue of the Bible. The English translation which is in our hands today, proclaims, whenever we read it, that the prayer of intercession prevails. The English Bible is a witness to the power of intercessory prayer.

It is startling to us sometimes—especially when we have grown careless or lukewarm about intercessory prayer—to turn to the Gospel as John wrote

it and see the place occupied there by Christ's intercessory prayer. The closing hours of Christ's life had come. He poured out His heart to His disciples. So helpful, so living were the words He then spoke, that the four chapters beginning with "Let not your heart be troubled," are the best loved chapters of the Bible. How do they end? How does Christ conclude His last opportunity of free association with His disciples? He concludes it with a prayer—a prayer not for Himself, but for them; for them and those who should believe on Him through their words. This was His last legacy, His crowning service to mankind, ere He died.

Earlier in His ministry He had said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee." Peter had no thought whatever of his particular need: he did not and could not foresee that he would be exposed to peculiar temptations that might lead him to forsake his Master, and even to deny Him. But Christ foresaw the whole exposure, and, in anticipation, Christ prayed for him. When the temptations came, and Peter did deny his Lord, Peter did not utterly fail, because the prayer of intercession prevailed. In the very hour of denial Peter's heart melted, and penitently he came back to Christ.

We can follow this special prayer of intercession by Christ for Peter and we can note its effects. We cannot in the same way follow the general prayer of intercession as given in John's seventeenth chapter, and note its particular answers. Yet we do not doubt that the courage of James at Jerusalem, and the sweetness of John at Patmos, and the safety and peace of hundreds like our own selves all over the world, were secured through that very prayer.

How much this world of ours would have lost had there been no intercessory prayer! Stephen prayed for the group of people who stood about him as he was being stoned to death—and lo, out of that group comes a young man, Paul, who gives his whole heart and life to the cause of Christ. What an omission it would have been if Stephen had not prayed! Away back in distant days, when Israel contended with the Amalekites in the valley, Moses was on the mountain, with Aaron and Hur at his sides. Moses stretched out his arms in prayer, that God would give victory to Israel. The day dragged on. Moses was old and his arms heavy. But Aaron and Hur helped him, upholding his outstretched arms in supplication: and when the day went down, victory was with Israel.

Intercessory prayer—to prevail—is to be unself-

ish. All prayer says, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." We are never to pray for things merely pleasing to us, irrespective of their relation to that holy will of God which embraces all His creatures as well as our particular selves. Pure and devoted souls will not obtrude their individual interests as imperative, among counsels that pertain to all humanity. Not one of us should ask God to make the day clear for him or her—unless a clear day is best for all the interests of God's will. Our health and strength and the health and strength of our friends are to be sought by us only as they minister to the advance of God's blessed wishes for us and others.

Intercessory prayer! for whom shall it be offered? Intercession is always for persons; we supplicate for things, we intercede for persons. Who shall these persons be? "For kings and for all that are in authority." Paul says. "Kings and all that are in authority" is an inclusive designation comprehending all charged with the responsibilities of public oversight and public welfare.

Tyndale prayed for Henry VIII.; we are to pray for all *rulers.*

The design of such prayer is defined, namely: that rulers shall so use their power that "the people

may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." The prayer is not that our special officer, whoever he may be, police magistrate, justice of the peace, mayor, governor, president, may be preserved in strength and may conduct his office so as to secure the praise of his particular following: but it is that every officer may administer his station to the good of others "in all godliness and honesty." Intercessory prayer rises above a party, an administration, a sect, a college, a corporation; it views all things in the light of eternal and world-embracing principles—principles of righteousness and goodness and truth—and in reality it asks that those who hold office shall be men who carry out the very will of God—for the good of humanity.

Of such prayer there never can be too much. Office is deceptive. Office has power, and often that power in itself gives a sense of self-sufficiency to the person who holds it. "Is this not great Babylon that *I* have builded?" boasted Nebuchadnezzar. To whom, forsooth, was *he* responsible? Men and women in the line of hereditary monarchies often forget that their authority, as all authority of any kind, is a God-conferred gift, and that they must use it as God wishes, else they desecrate it. Even when people have temporary authority conferred

upon them by the franchises of others, they may give their constituents supreme place in consideration, and thus rest their dependence upon those constituents rather than upon God. To keep office by pleasing their constituents becomes their chief aim. The temptation to do this is fearful. Knox did not care for office, did not care whether the queen honored him or dishonored him, whether she let him live or put him to death. What Knox cared for was Scotland's welfare. He did not consult, nor did he fear, the will of men: he consulted and he feared the will of God alone.

Today there is not a person bearing authority who does not need our intercessory prayer. Paul held his apostleship by a special call thereto, but in his sense of insufficiency, he said, "Pray for us." Every *minister* needs prayer. He has his own peculiar temptations: to formality, to slackness, to discouragement. He may do and say very foolish things; he may be like the shepherds of prophetic days who cried peace when there was no peace, and denied the people the spiritual food they lacked. On the other hand a minister of pure motives and true piety may be a great blessing. The people prayed, and when Peter stood up at Pentecost, three thousand hearts were changed. The people

prayed all night for John Livingstone, and when next day at Shotts he preached, five hundred souls came to Christ. A praying people make a powerful ministry. This is not due merely to the fact that knowledge of their prayers cheers the minister, though cheer him it does. When Spurgeon stepped forward into his tabernacle pulpit on a Sunday morning, with his large band of deacons around him—men who had spent a half hour in prayer that God's words through Spurgeon's lips might bring glory to God—Spurgeon himself felt stronger and the people who knew what had taken place felt the more expectant. For if there is anything God specially delights to own, it is prayer that the Holy Spirit may be in the assembly of His worshipers. God "loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Pray then for the minister, have children pray for him—not for his sake, but for the people's sake, and for God's glory in the people's good. What an opportunity for continued usefulness every invalid has, and everyone detained from the House of God has—to pray for the ministry of the Gospel! "God forbid," may they one and all declare, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for the ministry."

Authority is wide-spread and diversified. *Teachers* have it. They too are exposed to temptations—perhaps to be unduly dogmatic, perhaps to do their work for the work's sake, perhaps to withdraw too much from the responsibilities of the Church, and the burdens of the State. The power for good of a teacher's life, if that life be earnest, scholarly, unselfish and godly, is mighty. Day by day there comes the contact between the teacher and impressible souls. Little by little truths can be indoctrinated, ideals magnified, ambitions purified. If the spirit be what it may be, the effect will be, perhaps, a lifelong blessing. The pupil in after years will express views, and enforce sentiments that to him are absolutely his own—and still it was the teacher away back in the past, who somehow so inculcated all these views and sentiments that the teacher, not the pupil, is their real author.

Teachers *need* prayer—prayer that they may be patient, that they may see good possibilities in every pupil, and that they may endeavor to bring out those possibilities in all "godliness and honesty." We wish sound views of society, of business and of government taught; we wish the eternal principles of righteousness engrafted upon young life. When a man or woman so arouses the nobility of pupils

that the pupils scorn to do the wrong or the petty thing, and aspire after standards that are Christ-like, then the teacher fulfills his mission. But the very best teacher is in danger of carrying a heavy heart because routine is so unceasing, and drudgery so persistent. We do well then to pray that he may always come to his classes like a benediction and that his personal fellowship with his pupils may be an unceasing inspiration.

Nor may we leave out from "authority" *employers of labor.* Certainly such employers have their peculiar temptations. Often they are deceived, often they are severely tried by the slackness and unfaithfulness of their employees. The superior mental and material gifts whereby employers hold authority may prove a snare to their hearts. Because others have a lower order of talent employers may, forsooth, look down on the others. Self-made men find it hard to deal gently with those whose incapacity always keeps them weaklings. But these self-made men are under special responsibilities. Because God has made them leaders, God has committed the welfare of tens, twenties, hundreds, thousands, into their hands. Their views, their decisions, their example, are fraught with mighty influence. The tendency with many men concern-

ing these employers is, not to pray for them, but to berate them. Fault is found with their deficiencies, and sometimes even antagonism is aroused against them.

The whole world today, even where there are Christian churches, is filled with those who do not understand one another. The effort to maintain interests dear to one set of people seems to blind the eyes of that set to the interests dear to another set. Hence the opposition and the bitterness. But it is far, far better to pray for "captains of industry" than to arouse hatred against them. Employers are but weak, fallible men, to whom God has assigned tremendous responsibility. Let us ask him to open their eyes, as the eyes of Henry VIII. were opened, and the result will be, that the hearts of employers will become wise and the lives of employees will become enriched.

The prayer of intercession offered for all that are in authority, offered not as a perfunctory utterance, but offered straight out of a burdened heart, assures all that are in authority that we understand their burdens, sympathize with their difficulties and expect "godliness and honesty" to characterize their purposes. A man in authority who is careless or wicked is a libel on his station; authority is con-

ferred by God only—that he who has it may strive to make this world a happy, beautiful place for every human life.

Our prayer of intercession is not complete when offered merely for those in authority; it is to be offered "for all men." When the High Priest came into the Holy of Holies with the breastplate over his heart, the name of every tribe was engraved on that breastplate. Face to face with God he interceded for *all*. We all need intercession. Whittier expresses in "The Prayer Seeker" the call of every human soul for our sympathy and intercession.

"Along the aisle where prayer was made
A woman, all in black arrayed,
Close veiled, between the kneeling host,
With gliding motion of a ghost,
Passed to the desk and laid thereon
A scroll which bore these words alone,
'Pray for me!'

"Back to the night from whence she came
To unimagined grief or shame!
Across the threshold of that door
None knew the burden that she bore;
Alone she left the written scroll,
The legend of a troubled soul,—
'Pray for me!'

"Glide on, poor ghost of woe or sin!
Thou leav'st a common need within;

Each bears, like thee, some nameless weight,
Some misery inarticulate,
Some secret sin, some shrouded dread,
Some household sorrow all unsaid.
'Pray for us!'

"He prayeth best who leaves unguessed
The mystery of another's breast.
Why cheeks grow pale, why eyes o'erflow,
Or heads are white, thou need'st not know.
Enough to note by many a sign
That every heart hath needs like thine.
'Pray for us!'"

In Mr. Moody's long and useful labors there was one story that he loved to tell because it suggested the glory of God and in no wise suggested the glory of Mr. Moody. He told it to indicate his belief in the power of prayer. This is the story:

"After the Chicago fire he went to London to rest and to learn from the Bible scholars there. He had no intention of preaching. One Sunday morning he was persuaded to preach in a church in London. Everything about the service dragged. He wished that he had never consented to preach. There was a woman in the city who had heard of Mr. Moody's work in America and had been asking God to send him to London. This woman was an invalid. Her sister was present at the church that Sunday morning. When the hearer reached home she asked her

sister to guess who had spoken for them that morning. She guessed one after another of those with whom her pastor was in the habit of exchanging, never guessing aright. Her sister said, 'No, Mr. Moody from Chicago.' The sick woman turned pale, and said, 'This is an answer to my prayer. If I had known that he was to be at our church, I should have eaten nothing this morning, but waited on God in prayer. Leave me alone this afternoon: do not let anyone come to see me; do not send me anything to eat.' All that afternoon that woman gave herself to prayer. As Mr. Moody preached that night, he soon became conscious that there was a different atmosphere in the church. 'The powers of an unseen world seemed to fall' upon him and his hearers. As he drew to a close he felt impressed to give out an invitation. He asked for all who would accept Christ to rise. Four or five hundred people rose. He thought that they misunderstood him, and so he put the question several ways that there might be no mistake. But no, they had understood. He then asked them to go to an adjoining room. As they passed out, he asked the pastor of the church who these people were. He replied, 'I do not know.' 'Are they your people?' 'Some of them.' 'Are they Christians?' 'I do not think so.'

In that adjoining room he put the question very strongly, but still there were just as many who rose. He told them to meet their pastor the next night. Next day he left for Dublin, but no sooner had he reached there than he received a telegram from the pastor saying that he must return and help him, for a great revival had commenced, and there were more out the second night than the first. Hundreds were added to the church at the time."

That was the beginning of Mr. Moody's work as an *international evangelist.* Out of that work came the religious quickening of Great Britain and Ireland, and the salvation of thousands upon thousands of souls throughout the world. Well was it for England and all Europe that the invalid woman did not cease to pray for the ministry of God's word.

The Talent of Intercession.

Not everyone realizes that ability to pray is a talent. When the Rev. Charles G. Finney, about 1830, was laboring for deeper, stronger religious life among the people of Western New York, there was one man whose praying seems to have done very much toward obtaining the desired results. In Utica, Syracuse, Binghamton, Rochester, Rome, great numbers of persons were aroused to new earnestness. Great numbers, also, renouncing sin, entered upon the Christian life. In all that country religion became the foremost thing. It leavened society and business. It controlled ambition. The person who, as the world saw, was the one through whom these results were secured, was the preacher, Mr. Finney.

But there was another person who had part in these results, Mr. Abel Clary. He never appeared in public gatherings. He gave himself wholly to private prayer. He was an educated man. He had been licensed to preach. He preached, how-

ever, very little. He was so burdened with the souls of men that he gave almost his whole time and strength to intercession. He was a very silent man. Mr. Finney had known him from boyhood and had the greatest respect for his character. This Mr. Clary, lying in bed as a consumptive, and drawing a little table to his side, would write in his journal day by day, "My heart has been moved to pray for Utica, for Syracuse, for Binghamton, for Rochester, for Rome." After Mr. Clary's death, Mr. Finney obtained this memorandum book and found that in the precise order of the burden laid upon that man's heart was the order of blessing as poured upon Mr. Finney's ministry in the places named. Among other notes he discovered a memorandum about Ceylon. Looking into the records of the American Board, he found that at the time when Mr. Clary was praying on his sickbed for Ceylon, there had been a great forward movement in that land.

We are familiar with the thought that every talent we possess or can possess should be cultivated. Sometimes the talent is that of money-making, sometimes that of public speaking, sometimes that of doing drudgery faithfully. We believe in many kinds of talents, and we believe that every individual has some special talent, given him by God, to be

used for the world's good. The man who knows how to lay a drain well has a great opportunity of aiding the public health. The woman who can regulate a home's atmosphere so that it shall be religiously beneficial also has a great opportunity. Every now and then, when someone stands forth very prominently as a writer, or as a speaker, or as a philanthropist, we say, "What a great talent that person has!" We immediately think "What a loss the world would suffer if that person's talent should not be used!" Certainly our world would be the poorer if a Victor Hugo had not written his books, and a Henry Ward Beecher had not preached his sermons, and a George Peabody had not erected his buildings. The whole of Western New York and great parts of Ohio and Illinois, affected by the men who came from western New York, would have suffered a distinct and grievous loss had not Mr. Finney spoken and labored as he did.

But do we keep to the front in our minds this thought, that there is a talent of prayer as truly as there are other talents? Mr. Clary used the talent of prayer as God entrusted it to him. The results of his use of intercession were very great. Thousands of lives would have been the poorer had he not used his talent.

There are many worthy people asking themselves what more they can do to advance the good of the world. They give themselves to every kind of beautiful enterprise; they provide holidays for the weary; they take little children from the crowd of the city to the open spaces of the country; they nurse the sick; they furnish safe pleasures to the tempted; they teach; they preach; they do everything that human ingenuity, under the inspiration of Christian love, can suggest. The many beautiful agencies of help, all under Christ and all for Christ, at work in the world are legion. Let not one of them be relaxed. Let all be sustained, and let a thousand more be added to them as opportunity may arise. Ability to use any or all of these agencies is a talent. As a talent let it be magnified. But side by side with these different talents let there be recognition of still another talent, a talent that perhaps sometimes lies wrapped in a napkin unused—the talent of intercession. The Yoriba Christians call prayer "the *gift* of the knees," for to them prayer is a special endowment directly bestowed by God.

Every now and then we are confronted by some grave statements concerning the use of this talent of intercession. It is not a rare occurrence to hear the very men who, we might think, would most real-

ize their dependence on divine help confess that their own personal use of intercessory prayer is very limited. This information often comes out at a time when there is a gathering of ministers, or perhaps a more general gathering of Christian "workers." The questions then are asked, "How much time each day do you spend in interceding with God for the advance of His work? Is it an hour, a half hour? Is it fifteen minutes?" The answers to such questions are startling. The number of persons who regularly give fifteen minutes a day to this means of blessing is very small.

Of course we all understand that intercession is not a matter of place nor of attitude. Dr. Henry M. Scudder, when questioned in public on this very subject, once said, "I walk the streets of Chicago, picking my way in and out of the multitudes and I am praying for those multitudes every minute." So others may pray as did Dr. Scudder. Wherever they may be—on trains, in stores, at public entertainments they may continually and earnestly ask God to bless those who are around them. Such prayer may be unobserved by any human eye, but the divine eye observes it, and to that eye it is direct prayer. When we see people in their sorrow or see them in their thoughtlessness or see them,

like Lot, exposing their children by too near residence to Sodom, we may silently lift our hearts to God for them.

While not one word passes our lips, nor one change takes place in our bodily attitude, our intercession is true intercession. God hears it and regards it.

Even after all such silent prayer has been reckoned as intercession, how large a place does such intercession have in our lives? How does its place compare with the place held by other matters? If the place is a small one, is the reason for that small place our misunderstanding of the value of intercessory prayer? Have we thought about intercession as a talent entrusted to us for whose use we are responsible? We hear the calls for our money and we try to respond conscientiously to cases of need. We intend also to advocate all enterprises that make for the welfare of humanity. We hold ourselves ready to do much running, thinking, working for every cause known to be dear to Christ. But do we forget that Christ spent a whole night in prayer before He chose His twelve fellow-workers and before He preached His Sermon on the Mount? Do we forget that the early church continued for days in prayer before Peter's words

at Pentecost could be effective? Does our eye fail to note that Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians has two distinct prayers in it, as though Paul's hope for the good of the Ephesians rested, not so much in his words of instruction, as in God's power and blessing?

The history of the Christian church never has been completely written. That history has been attempted and well attempted. The deeds done by men in the name and for the sake of Christ have been told. These deeds make a remarkable record: the record of all martyrdoms, of all missionary advances, of all philanthropic conquests. These nineteen hundred years have witnessed scenes that are well calculated to stir the blood and make brave the heart of the student of church history. But nothing except exterior effects and the supposed motives back of these exterior effects have as yet been described. The throne of grace, out from which go the answers to prayer, is curtained. No one has been able to draw aside that curtain and show the world the spiritual helps that in answer to prayer have issued from that throne. It is by these helps that history largely has been wrought out. There are some instances in which we can trace the direct influence of intercession. We read in the Scripture

that Peter was delivered from prison because men and women, meeting together, prayed for his deliverance. When then we see Peter, a free man, knocking at the door of John Mark's home we understand that the means whereby he has become free is prayer.

In profane history, too, there is an occasional narrative that indicates the unseen force of prayer. The Marquis of Argyle was one of Scotland's noble witnesses for Christ's cross and crown. On the morning of the day on which he was to be executed he was engaged in settling worldly affairs. Several of the leading people of Scotland were in the prison room with him. Suddenly in the midst of his business his soul was visited with such a sense of the divine favor as almost overwhelmed him. He attempted to conceal his emotions. He arose and went to the fireplace to stir the fire. But soon he turned around and with great fervor said, "I see that this will not do. I must now declare what the Lord has done for my soul. He has just now, at this very instant of time, sealed my charter in these words, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.'" A little later he went to the scaffold. In the hour when he was put to death he had the most perfect assurance and a most triumphant calm.

The scene in the prison room as thus described was all that the human observers could see. But was there nothing unseen that was of significance that day? Yes, there was. For in a retired part of Edinburgh the wife of the Marquis and the Rev. John Carstairs during that morning were praying for the Marquis. They knew that the Marquis would be put to death. They wished him to die, if he must, so calmly that his death would show the power of Christian faith and would contribute to Christ's glory in Scotland. They made one special plea for the Marquis, that the Lord would seal his charter by saying to him, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." It was that very assurance that came into the heart of the Marquis as he turned to the fireplace in the prison, and it was that assurance, secured to him by others through prayer, that sustained him in his brave death.

Nor do these instances stand alone. So soon as the facts are known, it becomes evident that the means whereby some of the most blessed events of life have been secured was prayer. The history of Yale University tells of a great revival which one hundred years ago stirred the whole college community. The secret of the revival was, that a group

of men were so earnest in their desire to have a spiritual awakening that "they got up before daybreak, day after day in the long winter months, and gave themselves to earnest prayer for that definite thing. A revival began and spread from class to class until almost every man in the college was led into faith in Christ." Mary, Queen of Scotland, realized that in John Knox the talent for prayer had been so cultivated that it had become a mighty force. She once declared, "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men."

It is impossible to estimate the power for usefulness latent in hearts capable of prayer. No one conceived the power lying latent in steam until the spirit of steam, asserting itself, began to transform the earth. No one conceived the power lying latent in electricity until electricity, asserting itself, began its world-wide ministry. The power lying latent in hearts capable of prayer is similarly great. Luther prayed for the Diet of Nuremberg. He interceded with intense earnestness. He laid hold of the throne of grace with such power that he seemed to prevail with God. He felt sure, even before the Diet took action, that those who composed it would stand firm in Reformation principles. And they did. The people of Enfield, Massa-

chusetts, prayed all night that the sermon to be preached by their pastor Jonathan Edwards might be blessed to the good of souls. When the sermon was preached the congregation left their pews, crowding up the pulpit stairs and asking what they might do to obtain the salvation of God.

DeQuincey divides all literature into the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. As there is a literature of power so there is a prayer of power. It is the prayer of power of which we stand in need. A powerless Christian ought to be considered as great a misnomer as a powerless thunderbolt. If the talent of prayer should be cultivated as assiduously as the talent of business is cultivated, the result would be that numberless people who never can be forceful in speech, nor bounteous in beneficence, nor energetic in evangelism, would become as effective forces for the world's help as any men and women who have ever lived.

Mrs. Elizabeth Prentiss in one of her letters used the significant expression, "learning the mysterious art of prayer by an apprenticeship at the throne of grace." How many of us have ever thought of "learning" to pray? Or, of "an apprenticeship at the throne of grace?" In another sentence Mrs. Prentiss enlarges on this idea. She says: "I think

many of the difficulties attending upon the subject of prayer would disappear if it could be regarded in early life as an art that must be acquired through daily, persistent habits with which nothing shall be allowed to interfere." Thus she makes "learning" to pray as much of a training as learning to sing, or paint, or write. She exalts prayer into an "art"—and makes us realize that the same application, concentration, persistency and heartiness needed to become a sculptor, are needed by us if the talent of prayer (possible to every one) reaches its greatest development. Happy the man who, like Epaphras commended of Paul, learns so well the lesson of prayer that his distinguishing characteristic is that he "always labors fervently in prayer for others."

What blessings are awaiting the world if we only develop the talent of prayer to its fullest possibility! Has not the time come when we, one and all, will do our part to re-assert the power of the Christian church? Andrew Bonar with great sorrow wrote in his diary: "I work more than I pray." Also he wrote: "I must at once return, through the Lord's strength, to not less than three hours a day spent in prayer and meditation upon the Word."

There is no doubt that God longs to have His

servants so love their fellows that they shall rest not day nor night in interceding in their behalf. He waits for the effectual fervent prayer. Oh, that thousands upon thousands of God's people would awake to their possibility, and would become powerful in His Kingdom through learning to *prevail* with God in prayer!

For Whom Christ Asks Intercession.

The general classes of people for whom Paul asked our intercession have been considered. A very important inquiry now presents itself: Are there special persons indicated by Christ's commands or practices who stand out with preëminence as persons for whom we should pray?

When we study Christ's own practices we find five classes of people for whom He prayed or for whom He taught us to pray. One was the *sick*. He Himself healed the sick, using miracles.

These miracles were Christ's advertisements. They called attention to His wondrous power, His wondrous words, and His wondrous personality. He might have used heralds to sound a trumpet and get the ears of the crowd whom He then would address. But He preferred to present Himself directly to men in the deeds of healing. Such healing was a blessing in itself. Such healing evidenced the kindliness of His heart and made clear His purpose to relieve distress. Such healing also, from

its marvelous power, marked Him as the unique One who could not be confused with any other.

Only once, if then, did Christ pray over the sick. One was brought to Him who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. Christ took him aside, looked up to heaven, sighed, and healed him. "Looked up to heaven." That is the only phrase in Christ's life containing even a hint that He prayed over the diseased. He seems never to have asked Heaven's aid to heal anyone. He always claimed that He had power in himself to heal. That one upward look we think was intended to assist the observer. It helped the observer to associate the deed of healing with God above, and so it helped him to believe that the power whereby Christ wrought the miracle, was divine.

But while Christ did not pray for the sick, He intimated that we should pray for them. A lunatic boy was brought by the boy's father to Christ. The disciples had not been able to heal him. Christ healed the boy. The disciples inquired why they had failed to heal him. Christ answered that their failure was due to their lack of faith. But He immediately added that a disease of this kind would not leave a man except "by prayer."

This reference to prayer seems to be a direct in-

timation that Christ expects us to pray for the sick. It warrants us in bringing all our weak and suffernig ones to Him that they may be made whole. Christ Himself never refused the prayer addressed to Him by loving hearts for the healing of disease. "He healed them all." Likewise He bade all who were weary and heavy laden come to Him, assuring them that He would give them rest.

A second class for whom Christ taught us to pray were *children*. He did this by direct example. As Matthew states it, "Mothers brought young children to Christ that He should put His hands on them and pray."

The significance of this scene is often lost. Many think of it as though Christ merely placed His hands on their heads and said some kindly words over the children. No. He "prayed" for them. A blessing spoken by a godly man over a child is indeed in its very nature a prayer. Accordingly it is true that were John the Beloved here today, and were he, placing his hands on the forehead of a little child presented to him, to say, "May God ever take care of you, and keep you, little child"—that blessing would be a prayer.

But when Christ "prayed" over little children there must have been, it would seem, distinct in-

tercession for them. We wonder what petitions He offered! We wonder whether the hearts of the mothers were satisfied when they heard the special wishes He expressed for the children. The whole setting of the scene makes us feel that He did not ask for money, place, power or health. Rather He asked that they might be heavenly minded, so that they should do Heaven's work upon earth, and then do Heaven's work in glory.

There never can be too great and too earnest prayer for little children. "He who helps a child helps humanity with a distinctiveness, with an immediateness, which no other help given to human creatures in any other stage of their human life can possibly give again." Children have in themselves the making or unmaking of the world. Even while they are little children the characteristics of their lives are largely decided. Almost before parents and friends realize the fact, they are eight, ten and twelve years old. In most cases, by this time, character has taken its general bent. We must labor and pray very early if we are to reach children. It was so in Palestine when Christ was there. The boy of twelve became a citizen of Israel and entered the church. The girl at twelve was well on her way toward marriage. The statistics of the cities

where great masses of children center, tell us that street boys are started upon their careers even before they are twelve. Captains of police, matrons of reform schools, and city missionaries report that character, good or bad, is stamped upon children even before the children reach their teens.

All students of the religious experience make similar report. The fathers and mothers who have children to be nurtured, the Sunday school teachers who have scholars to be guided, the instructors who through five days, and the nurses who through seven days are charged with the care of young lives, have a very grave responsibility. As goes the child, so goes the world. If Satan can hurt children, he hurts the kingdom of heaven, and all that that kingdom stands for. Instead of our being careless concerning children, we should be solicitous and even prayerful for them. Our prayer should be in the very spirit and to the very ends that characterized Christ's prayer for them—that they may belong to, and do the service of, the kingdom of heaven.

The third class for whom Christ taught us to pray were *disciples*. This prayer also He taught us by direct example.

Sometimes He prayed for a particular disciple, as, for Peter: sometimes for the Twelve, the special

ones who in His day were charged with heralding His truth: and sometimes for the whole body of believers, present and future alike. He carried Christian people on His heart. He felt that the greatest responsibility that ever devolved upon men was devolved upon them. As the Father had sent Him into the world, even so did He send them into the world. They were to be His representatives. They were to bring forth much fruit to His glory. So great was their mission that before He chose the twelve He sought God's blessing in prayer. Later, as He was to ascend from Olivet, and leave His followers, He prayed for those followers.

Christian people need prayer. They are in the world to continue today the very work which Christ when here began. They are to seek the needy, relieve the oppressed, deliver the imprisoned. They are to comfort the sorrowful and to rescue the sinner. Every soul of all humanity is to be cheered and brightened by them. Service is their distinctive calling. It is for this they are chosen as Christ's disciples. Prayer then should be offered that every communicant, every officer, every worker in the Christian Church should answer to this call to service. "I am glorified in them," Christ said, and according to the faithfulness with which His disciples do His work is Christ glorified among men.

The three classes of persons that have been mentioned as those for whom Christ taught us to pray, are distinct classes by themselves. We pray for them because we infer from His words or example that we should do so. Now comes the fourth class for whom we are to pray. This fourth class is one for whom we are positively *commanded* to pray.

"Pray for them that *despitefully use you and persecute you,* Christ said. What He charged us to do He Himself did. On Calvary, when men maligned and tortured Him, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" The people for whom He thus prayed were the inflamed and passionate multitudes that surrounded the cross. Prominent among them were the priests. The Scripture reads that these priests stirred up the people to shout "Crucify!" and that the priests persuaded the people to choose Barabbas rather than Christ.

The Ober-Ammergau peasants, when they place the scene of the crucifixion on the stage, show the priests moving actively among the crowd. The priests whisper suspicions and breathe out hatred, until the popular mind is alarmed and even embittered. The peasants make, as does the Scripture, the priests the aggressive party in the crucifixion.

When Christ prayed, "Forgive them," he prayed for these very priests who despitefully used Him and persecuted Him. A few days later Pentecost came. Thousands of hearts turned to God in penitence. "And a great company of priests believed." The prayer indeed was answered!

It is not easy to pray for those that abuse us. We must have control of self and love to others to offer such prayer. The absence of bitterness is not enough. There must be the presence of sympathy. Christ was wonderfully wise when He commanded this prayer. Divided counsels are a hindrance in any good cause. So long as jealousies existed between the army officers of our civil war, that war was a failure. So long as officers asserted their own dignity to the detriment of their fellow officers, there could not be success. Animosities had to be surrendered. Loyalty to a single commander had to be cherished. Then the war hastened to its close.

We are to pray for the divided camps of Christendom. We are to pray that dissensions among God's people shall cease. Like Moses of old, we are to rejoice when others than ourselves have inspiration from the Almighty, and say, "Let Eldad and Medad be among the prophets. Would God that all the people might prophesy!"

The hurt to a man's own heart in cherishing hatred is fearful. Had Christ's spirit on the cross been bitter, the cross would have been the place of His shame, not His glory. He could not have died in peace unless His heart was sweet. Hate is folly. It discolors vision and biases judgment. It makes the man of war nurse his wrongs and sulk in his tent when he should be on the battle line. Nothing has hindered the advance of Christ's army more than the unkind feelings cherished by Christians towards those with whom they disagree. Such feelings are to be overpowered with love. Every denomination must sacrifice its cherished distinctions rather than let those distinctions be a hindrance to Christ's cause. Whatever embitters us against other Christians must be surrendered. Words like "Calvinism" and "Arminianism," intended to be sources of love, must never be sources of hate. Special doctrines must not become idols to us and so stand between God and the world's good. Christian men cannot afford to quarrel. Quarreling incapacitates for usefulness. Quarreling hardens the heart to the reception of truth. In praying for those who despitefully use us we do not pray that God will humble them to our special views or our special methods. Rather we pray that God will lead them

as shall seem wisest and best to Him, and will use them to His own infinite glory.

The last persons for whom Christ charged us to pray were *laborers for His harvest field.*

Here is a prayer that stands out by itself. It introduces us into a new realm of thought. Again and again this prayer is forgotten. Christ saw the multitudes. They came from cities and villages. They were pitifully ignorant. They were pitifully weak. They were like sheep that do not know where pasturage and safety are—like shepherdless sheep that are exposed to every danger. These multitudes made direct appeal to His heart. His heart answered to that appeal. What heart is there, if it have the least degree of tenderness, that does not pity the misled, the mistaken, and the imperiled? Seeing the multitudes and knowing their need, He said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the *laborers* are few."

What Christ then said many another has since repeated. "So many needy lives in the world and so few people to help them!" The deeper we see into the hearts of men, the more we realize their sorrows and their sins. There is not a village so small but that in it there are souls to be visited, comforted, and uplifted. Not a town so orderly

but that in it there are vices to be fought. Not a city so evangelized but that in it multitudes are on the way to destruction. Who shall purify the homes of squalor, who take the children from the streets and save them, who protect the boys and girls of sixteen and direct their youthful energy into holy pleasures? The market places need righteousness, the court rooms need justice, the schools need consecration, the churches need thousands upon thousands of workers. "Come over and help us," is the cry that is ringing out from multitudes that no man can number. Politics needs integrity, government needs faithfulness, the army and the navy need spirituality. Missionaries everywhere are calling for men and women to enter unoccupied fields.

It is startling to consider that the one great prayer laid upon Christ's people as a people is this prayer for laborers. In general terms we say each day, "Thy kingdom come!" In specific terms we are to say, "Send forth laborers into thy harvest." Praying for our enemies is usually a help to our personal sanctification. But praying for laborers is a help to the whole world's salvation.

"Today, as always, the great lack of the Kingdom is laborers." Every Christian enterprise laments because so few will help in its work. Every

church is asking for Sunday school teachers, who, like William E. Dodge, will lead souls to Christ. Merchant in New York City as he was, this man so knew and so taught the Bible that more than one hundred persons declared that he had brought them to the Christian life.

If men and women in one city like Chicago would enter dwellings, sitting down as a friend, cherishing interest in every individual child and beautifying the home, ten thousand of them could find opportunity for usefulness. A home thus made restful and attractive might prove a saving blessing to the father and the elder sons as they return at night.

The word "laborers," as Christ used it, is not to be limited to any particular set or sets of people. Laborers may be those who speak or those who write: may be those who give counsel, or money, or influence, or time. All who are engaged in efforts for the welfare of humanity are "laborers." It is true that Columbus, not Isabella, discovered America. But it is also true that unless Isabella had put her jewels at the use of Columbus, Columbus would not have discovered America. The direct and indirect laborers in God's harvest field are now very many. We name all men laborers whose purpose it is to elevate statesmanship, or purify litera-

ture, or sanctify commerce. Wherever there are those who fight against sin and strive to rescue the perishing, there are God's laborers. In homes, factories, railways, farms, there are great multitudes of such.

But granted that there are these multitudes thus engaged in their diversified efforts for human good, still the one prayer Christ commanded us to offer for "laborers" needs always to be upon our lips.

So many men brought up in Christian surroundings, are not "laborers!" They go to Alaska. Their single purpose is to get gold. Their interests are wholly selfish. As a result of their selfishness their influence upon the natives is destructive. Were they "laborers" how different their influence would be!

So with many of the troops that go to the Philippines. They drink, they carouse, they carry evil with them. So with many of the merchants that enter the treaty ports of China. They relax their principles. They live impurely. How they disgrace Christianity! How they hinder the missionary! Suppose, merchants as they are, they were in China as "laborers!" What a blessing, instead of a curse, they would be!

The great purpose of every Christian home is to raise up "laborers." The one specific prayer Christ

taught fathers and mothers to offer concerning their children is that they may be "laborers." It is to this end that parents are to feed them, protect them, educate them. Children fail of their glory unless they become "laborers." Parents fail of their responsibility unless they beseech God to equip their children for His service.

The words "send forth" are in the Greek one word. That word, used by Christ, is a very strong word. It means "drive out"—"thrust out." It is the very word applied to Christ when He, finding the Temple occupied by money changers and those who sold doves, "cast out" those intruders. It is also the word used when Christ "cast out" devils. Parents, pastors, and teachers are to pray that God will "thrust out" those dear to them into the harvest field. They are to pray that God will send such an irresistible conviction into their hearts as will compel them to do the labor of the harvest. "May my child have no rest until he is Thy laborer." So may we, so should we pray.

Yes, unless a family, a church, an institution exists to raise up laborers, it fails of its mission. All teaching, all friendship, all art, all literature answer to their supreme end when they help create Christian "laborers."

We are to pray that thousands upon thousands of laborers may be thrust forth. They are needed in America and in Africa. They are needed in every school, business, and church in the world. May we never, never forget that there is but one specific prayer which we are charged by Christ to offer concerning His kingdom. That prayer is, that God "would thrust forth laborers into His harvest."

The Comforter Sought For Service.

The prayer for the Holy Spirit as the Comforter! Do people understand the real significance of this special prayer? Have they a distinct idea of what is involved in it when they offer it for themselves and of what is involved in it when it becomes an intercession for others?

The prayer for the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit we are taught to offer with frequency and freedom. We cannot be too urgent in seeking for all the gifts of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control.

It rejoices us to know that God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit in these gifts than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children. "Come, Holy Spirit!" has long been the cry of the church, and it always will be the cry of the church.

But the prayer for the Holy Spirit as the Comforter seems to be a very special prayer. Its significance was indicated when Christ's prayer for the

Holy Spirit as the Comforter received its answer at Pentecost. Many public assemblages of Christian workers voice that answer. The more intent those who compose such assemblages are upon persuading others to obey the will of God, the oftener the prayer is offered for the Holy Spirit the Comforter and the deeper the earnestness that is expressed in it. Where formality of religious life prevails and where sense of responsibility for the spiritual welfare of others is weak, the prayer is offered less and less frequently and less and less fervently. Self-centered people and self-satisfied churches give it small place in their petitions.

Years ago a band of men and women in the Lodiana Mission, India, looking out upon the religious needs of their own country and of Europe, America and the world at large, saw how great these needs are. Their hearts became deeply stirred. The desire took possession of them that mankind everywhere should speedily know the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel. Inspired by this desire they issued a call for a world-wide observance of a Week of Prayer. The one supreme purpose of that Week should be, to pray that the Holy Spirit would use the church to the *salvation* of the world.

The prayer for the Holy Spirit as the Comforter

is a prayer Christ offered *for others.* He speaks of this prayer, offered by Him, as having a twofold suggestion. First, it suggested His love for His disciples. Second, it suggested His desire for a particular kind of blessing on them. It was, then, Christ's love for His disciples that caused Him to offer it. They were soon to lose His comradeship. As a consequence they would need spiritual guidance, courage and strength. This was especially true in view of the fact that the responsibility of representing Him before the world and advancing His kingdom would, with His departure, devolve upon them. Therefore He now asked, and stated that He would continue to ask, that the Comforter, that is a Spiritual Power from Heaven, should enter their hearts, directing, emboldening and supporting them. Thus, so far as he could protect them from loneliness and weakness, He would protect them—by securing for them special help. Accordingly he asked God to give them the Holy Spirit the Comforter, or as Wycliffe called Him, the "Helper."

The English word Comforter means primarily a Strengthener, a Supporter. People of Christ's day were accustomed to the Greek word used by Christ, "Paraclete," or Comforter. It meant one who went into the court room when a person appeared before

a tribunal and stood at his side, giving him counsel, cheering his spirit and advocating his cause. Such a comforter was a most valuable aid. He helped his friend to keep a clear head and answer wisely. He saved his friend from perturbation, as he suggested the action to be taken at any given moment. The mission of the comforter was to cheer and strengthen him at whose side he stood.

When Christ interceded for the Comforter, His disciples were about to appear before the world as before a tribunal. They were to stand in a great court room and be witnesses for the truth as it is in Christ. The supreme responsibility laid upon them was to plead the cause of Christ in the presence of their fellows and persuade others to accept the claims of Christ. For this great and important responsibility they needed help. Therefore Christ so particularly and earnestly sought for them the gift of the Comforter.

There was one special designation in this prayer that Christ linked with the "Comforter," namely, "the Spirit of Truth." This "Spirit of Truth" was indeed to be "another" Comforter, even as Christ Himself up to this time had been their first Comforter. The Spirit was to do for them in instruction, in counsel, in guidance, just what Christ hitherto had done.

But there was one particular feature of the Spirit's work which Christ desired should have pre-ëminent recognition and so He named the Comforter, the "Spirit of Truth." These disciples were going out into life to bear witness to Himself, the Truth. What they particularly needed therefore was a Helper who should put into their hearts the words, thoughts and purposes of Christ, the Truth, and should enable them to manifest Christ, the Truth, to the world. So Christ prayed that they might have the Comforter as "The Spirit of Truth." Having Him they would have the very spirit of Jesus Christ Himself and would be endowed for the work Jesus Christ wished of them.

We say of a man who has listened to the thrilling stories of a hunter until he is on fire to go where the hunter has gone and to do what the hunter has done, that the man has caught the hunter's spirit. A youth listening to a missionary may become so aflame to visit the unenlightened and even, if need be, lay down his life for them, that we say of the youth, he has caught the missionary's spirit. So the Holy Spirit coming to men was to impart such views of Christ's character and work that Christ and His work should be their inspiration, and they catching Christ's spirit should live to exemplify Christ and

advance His work. All those truths which Christ entered earth to present, the Holy Spirit was to help them to present. He was to give them power to know the right, to bless their fellows and to honor Christ. The Spirit of Truth would encourage them for Christian activity and would sustain them in Christian suffering. He would create a great body of men, who like knights would rally to the defense of right and would battle for the downfall of wrong.

A special condition of mind is requisite that the Holy Spirit may possess men as Christ then prayed that the Spirit might possess His disciples. The Holy Spirit in this mission of the Comforter, the Paraclete, is intended only for those who are ready to glorify Christ before the world. The man that is indifferent whether his influence tells as powerfully as possible for helping Christ's cause *cannot* receive the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. Such a man is in no sympathy with the particular work He has come to accòmplish. Such a man is not a tool meet for the Spirit's use. Ananias and Sapphira, swayed by selfish purposes, cannot be the Spirit's instrument, nor can Demas, loving this present world more than the souls for whom Christ died. No person can ever have the Comforter who wishes Him as an opiate. Such a person has no worthy

conception of the Comforter's mission, nor has he any true realization of what the Comforter wishes done. People who ask to receive Him for these purposes alone, have no idea of His particular function in the kingdom of grace. Unless they wish Him that they may be better fitted for serving Christ in the lives of others, they are unprepared to profit by his presence. Inert rock that has no intention of producing vegetation is not advantaged by sunlight. It is the meadow that awaits the sunlight in order to bring forth grass and flowers that alone is advantaged by the sunlight.

There are many people who need to have their understandings aroused to a clear perception of the mission of the Comforter. He comes to *prepare men and women for Christian usefulness.* That is His one single purpose. When we pray that He may be given to a boy, our only reason for so praying is that the boy may be fitted to do something for Jesus Christ among his comrades or in his home. This intercession cannot be offered for one who is to continue sluggish in works of beneficence. The coming of the Comforter is a trumpet call to action —and that action, earnest Christian usefulness.

Wonder is often expressed that when the day of Pentecost was come, the men and women who met

the occasion were so brave and ready. The explanation of their bravery and readiness is this: Christ, previous to His Ascension, charged them to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should come upon them as He had prayed that the Comforter might come. What did they need the Holy Spirit for? Why should they wait a single day for Him when time was so precious? What would they do with this gift of power through the Holy Spirit when they should receive it? The answer to these questions is found in the *mission* of the Comforter. He was not awaited to give them a sense of forgiveness, nor to be a lullaby of peace in their hearts, nor to teach them moral ideas—but to empower them for a definite and special service. A particular work had been entrusted to them. Speaking generally they were to be Christ's laborers in the harvest field of need. Speaking specifically they were to be His *witnesses.* They were to advocate His cause, declare His truths, tell His love and testify to His saving power in human life. This they were to do everywhere, in Jerusalem and to the uttermost parts of the earth. In view of this specific service, this witness bearing, Christ prayed for the Comforter to come to them. The Comforter was to be to them the great dynamic whereby they could fulfil their

mission. He was to empower them to do what devolved upon them as witnesses.

They recognized that this was the purpose of Christ's prayer. Accordingly when the sound as of a rushing mighty wind came from heaven, and the tongues of fire appeared (exterior signals indicating to the disciples that the hour for action had arrived) these men and women who had simply been *waiting to bear their testimony* sprang forward to give it. The conception of the Christian life that animated their whole being was, *bringing the world to Christ through witness bearing for Him.* This conception the Holy Spirit now told them should be expressed in deeds. He enabled them to express it, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Scripture, kindling their bravery, giving them utterance and imparting power to win souls. The prayer for the Holy Spirit as the Comforter means service for Christ in saving men. Irresponsibility for the welfare of others, disinclination to effort, withdrawal from the world's woe are as far from this prayer as east is from west. When Christ prayed this prayer, He wished God to take those few men who were His disciples and so charge them with the forces of Heaven that they would rise triumphant above all hesitation and would spring forward to conquer this

world in His name. Nothing should terrify nor deter them. They should go anywhere, speak to any man, endure any privation, in attempting to lead men to believe in Christ.

Sometimes in the campaign of an army the bugle call suddenly sounds. The camp has been asleep. But the hour has come for fighting and the bugle sounds the notes of "battle." Immediately the men are awake. Straightway horses are saddled, artillery is unlimbered and ten minutes after the call the whole camp is transformed. The army that ten minutes before appeared so impotent and indeed was so impotent, through that bugle call has become powerful. Let opportunity for action now come, and the army will manifest its might. It will answer to the end for which it has been created and it will fight with energy and daring.

The prayer for the Comforter is the prayer that God will sound His bugle call in the heart of the Christian and will arouse him to aggressive action. The Christian is no more to sit at ease. No more is he to dream of himself, of his home, and of his pleasures. He is now a soldier in the field, enlisted under Christ and for Christ, to do a soldier's service. He is to fight his captain's battles, resisting the evil of life and trying to draw men to follow his leader.

When that prayer was answered in Peter's heart he could not rest until he had looked straight into the eyes of the people at Jerusalem and told them that they needed a Saviour. When it was answered in Pilkington's heart he felt that he must go to Uganda, take up Mackay's work and carry forward the interests for which Mackay had lived and died. When that prayer was answered in Mary Lyon's heart she founded the Mount Holyoke training school where girls should catch the spirit of Christ's life and be inspired to redeem the world. When that prayer was answered in F. B. Meyer's heart, he started, with an energy entirely new, to reach every living man with words that glowed with the love of Christ.

The prayer for the Holy Spirit the Comforter is one that many a parent hesitates to offer for his child: it involves too much for the child. The answer to that prayer may thrust the child out of his present luxurious surroundings, into efforts, self-denials and sacrifices from which the parent desires to protect his child. That prayer for a child may make a child leave home and go forth, as Henry Martyn did, to meet responsibilities otherwise avoidable: may end forever his being "an ornament to society," and, because of his zeal and persistency, may cause all society to look on him askance.

Nor does every man dare to offer this prayer for himself. Students who offer it for themselves may find God straightway showing them paths of usefulness so different from those they cherish, that to walk in them will require a wholly new plan of life. Young men in theological seminaries who pray this prayer for themselves may see fields of opportunity opening before them such as they never have been willing to consider. Men and women who pray it for themselves may see their business and social practices in such a new light, that they will be ashamed to continue those practices and will have to change their methods.

The prayer for the Comforter is a very searching prayer. It is the prayer that answered gives the church power. Its answer causes the church to break loose from listlessness and all hindrances, and become a giant—mighty to the pulling down of sin's strongholds and to the upbuilding of Zion's palaces. We believe in this prayer. In our heart of hearts we thoroughly believe in it. We wish every youth would offer it for himself and every parent would offer it for his child. Then the age of religious indifference would end. Then the age of religious chivalry and knighthood would begin. Pentecosts would be wherever the Christian church is. There

would be no more servants of the Lord sleeping in the laps of Delilahs. There would be multitudes of mighty men abroad in the earth, and their testimony for Jesus would be glorious.

We do well to intercede for the Comforter in the hearts of Christian people. His coming giveth power to the faint and increaseth strength to him that hath no might. Let the Comforter come to His church—ready and eager to rescue individual souls—and that church will be fair as the morn, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.

Even so may the Holy Spirit the Comforter come!

Special Petitions for Our Beloved.

Once a peculiar discussion arose among some undergraduates gathered in a college room at Cambridge, England. The question had been asked, "What kind of a man would you like to have at your bedside in case you were dying?" So it was proposed that each should write under cover the name of the minister he would wish with him in such circumstances. Papers were brought out, each wrote a name, the papers were folded, collected and read. To the surprise of all each one had written the same name and that name was the name of one of the least mentioned ministers of Cambridge. The minister was a quiet man whose church was never crowded. But quiet and lacking in brilliancy as he was, the minister was known to be a man of prayer, who cared more for God's blessing on others than for men's applause of himself. These undergraduates somehow believed in him and in his prayer.

An earnest man's prayer is a force for good.

Abraham had influence with God for Sodom. Again and again Abraham prayed that God would spare Sodom from destruction, and every time he so prayed God yielded to his wish. No one now knows, no one ever will know—until eternity dawns—the evils that have been averted from human lives by the prayers of others.

Besides averting evils from others the prayers of loving hearts have secured blessings to them. A young man at Dothan was so alarmed because of the seemingly overwhelming forces that threatened Israel, that his heart failed him. But Elisha prayed and said, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see." Thereupon the young man looking up to the mountain that was near by saw the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire, ready to defend Israel against the enemy. Immediately the young man's courage asserted itself and he became fearless.

True love for others is intended to inspire prayer for them. Such love was in Paul's heart for the Philippian Church. Words of endearment were often on his pen when he wrote to them. He called them "My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown." That love led him to pray for them. This was his prayer:

"THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND YET MORE AND MORE IN KNOWLEDGE AND IN ALL JUDGMENT,

"THAT YE MAY APPROVE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT,

"THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST:

"BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH ARE BY JESUS CHRIST,

"UNTO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD."

This prayer has four great petitions. The first of them is, *"that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."*

Sometimes we ask ourselves, what special requests shall we make for others? This prayer removes all uncertainty. Our requests certainly should be, that others may have increasingly loving dispositions that are at once intelligent and discriminating.

Paul has a remarkable way of putting words together. In small, compact sentences he says much and says that much judiciously. To him a loving disposition was the supreme product of Christianity. In the description he gives in his first letter to the Corinthian church of the characteristics and uses of love, he makes love the best possession that can be held by the human heart. "Love never faileth." Eloquent talking will some day be valueless. In-

formation, though it be encyclopedic, will eventually be disappointing. So too will luxury and applause. But a loving disposition will always be valuable and satisfying. Unselfish interest in others is a lasting joy and an unceasing benediction. Fellow man needs love, God rejoices in love and eternity perpetuates love. Love is the immortal part of our being, for it is the only part worthy of immortality.

When anyone prays for another "that his love may abound yet more and more" he prays a great prayer for him. What strength and joy and nobleness would characterize men if in every soul that now has some love, that love should "abound!" The good in many a man is small and inexpressive. In defense and explanation of him we often are obliged to say: "If the secret springs of that man's life could be seen, it would be known how many noble traits he has!" But the pitifulness is, that a friend has to insist that the noble traits exist. The lost piece of money was in the house. No one denied it was there. But a great search was requisite to find it, and bring it to light!

That your love may "abound." Once I went into a palatial home and found at every step, yes, almost at every half step, some beautiful article, brought from Italy or Egypt, India or Japan. As these orna-

ments, whichever way I looked, filled my eye, I said, "Beautiful things *abound* in this house!" The heart in which love "abounds" is a blessed heart. Generous instincts and gracious forgivenesses are in it. Tender sympathies are in it. It has no place for envies and jealousies. Anger and malice, hatreds and grudges, every little and every large unlovingness are crowded out of the heart. When sunlight "abounds" in a house, darkness must fly away. When warmth "abounds" in a heart, no room is left for coldness. Our world would become unspeakably sweet and helpful, if in all Christian hearts loving kindness abounded "yet more and more." The most attractive lives would become even more attractive. Men like Drummond and Peabody would take on a new winsomeness. Even the weakest and least pleasing Christians would begin to glow with beauty. Harshness and bitterness would go, as mists go before the rising sun—and these weakest and least pleasing Christians would be strong and bright. That which in a man's own soul tastes sweetest to the soul itself is love. That which in a man's own mind most refreshes the mind itself is love. As love abounds "yet more and more," content abounds, joy abounds, godliness abounds.

Reference has already been made to the fact that

Paul used words judiciously. In this very petition he so uses them. Notice the full statement of this petition: "that your love may abound yet more and more *in knowledge and in all judgment.*"

The words "knowledge" and "judgment" safeguard the petition and make it an exceedingly wise one. "Knowledge" means acquaintance with the facts of a given situation in which love is drawn out: "judgment" means discernment of the proper methods in which love should express itself. What Paul had in mind was that these Philippians should love intelligently, should use "sense" in their affection and in the expression of their affection. Love may become the sport of every impulse. Unwise love has wrought great evil in the world. Sometimes such love has been like a frenzy. Paul prays that it may never be a frenzy. He wishes it to be deep and strong and full-volumed, but never like a river that breaks down its dam or like a fire that destroys its chimney. Love is not to run away with judgment, but the rather is to be controlled and directed by judgment.

When the Crusades were proclaimed in Europe, thousands of people, impelled by the purest motives, rushed into the Crusades. They loved Christ: they were ready to do and even to die that Christ's

sepulchre might be rescued from the Moslem. The enthusiasm of the hour swept them off their feet. Carried captive by a love that did not stop to consider what was involved in their action, they bade farewell to their homes and started for the Holy Land, as unprepared for travel as an unarmed soldier is for battle. As a consequence they fell by the wayside or perished by disease.

There is no contradiction between love and intelligence. They are meant to act in harmony. We are convinced that intelligent love is possible when we study a heart like that of Moses. He loved the children of Israel so intensely that for their welfare he would willingly sacrifice his very life. But intense as his love was, it was always directed by wisdom. Accordingly love sought out the best blessings and the safest situations that could be desired for Israel.

Paul himself is a similar illustration of the union of love and intelligence. He was very magnanimous and tender hearted. He exemplified the love he so emphatically described. And still, however devoted he was to others, he never said a foolish word to them, nor did he ever extend a hurtful sympathy.

To pray that the sphere of love may be "in knowledge and judgment" is to pray that the kind heart

may not make mistake in its kindness, hurting the very ones whom it designs to help. Wise love saves parents from unduly petting their children. Wise love in blessing others leaves no sorrow. When "love abounds yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment" human hearts grow very sweet and the world is greatly helped.

The second petition in Paul's prayer for the Philippians is *"that ye may approve things that are excellent."*

One day a son came home in rags and disgrace, and said, "Father, I have sinned." Yes, he had sinned. He had left his father's house when his father wished him to stay at home, and he had done many shameful deeds. His life had brought dishonor to himself and grief to his father. When, returning, he said, "I have sinned," he told the truth.

But there never would have been occasion for any such confession as this, if he had always "approved things that are excellent." His mistake and his sorrow were all due to the fact that he had approved things that were not excellent.

The word "approve" has an alternative reading in the margin, where the word "try" appears as its possible substitute. "Try" suggests familiar expe-

riences: A young man hears warnings against deception, profaneness and impurity. He says I will merely "try" them and see what they are. Then he "tries" a deception, a profaneness, an impurity. The way of "trying" evil is often the way of experiencing death. Boys and men go to destruction simply by trying inferior and hurtful things. The mere tasting of evil arouses within them an appetite for evil, and the poison of wrong enters every vein of their life. For a man to try things not excellent when he may try things that are excellent, is both folly and sin.

But no wiser and safer course of conduct can be suggested than that of "trying" things that *are* excellent. It is the course of conduct that leads to holy character.

> "O, make but trial of His love,
> Experience will decide
> How blest are they and only they
> Who in His love abide."

Discernment is needed to know the things that are excellent. Therefore it was that Paul prayed for "knowledge and judgment." The eyes of the understanding must be opened if good is to be recognized as good though it be in rags, and evil is to be recognized as evil though it comes as an

angel of light. Deception is on every hand. It came to Eve, it came to Esau, it came to Solomon. It lurks in every society where some comrade exerts a pernicious influence, it waits in every street where some miscreant whispers an evil solicitation.

The men and women who, always being able to know the things that are excellent, approve them, are sure to be splendid specimens of Christian beauty. "Excellent!" The word makes us think of things that rise up high, like the great mountains that tower above the foothills and have their summits in the skies. "Excellent!" The word speaks to us of graces that are the supreme graces—the lofty graces of far-advanced holiness, of perfect peace, of Christlike joy. He who has so long "tried the excellent things" that they have become incorporated into his being, has very exalted ideals and very exalted joys. He cannot demean himself to the low and the soiled.

The third petition in Paul's prayer for the Philippians is *"that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."*

There is a wealth of significance in the adjective "sincere" as Paul used it. Our English translators chose a strong word when they translated Paul's adjective "sincere." Sincere is a Latin word meaning

without wax (*sine cera*). The Latins applied it to a vase that did not need to be patched up but was perfectly whole. Sometimes vases had cracks which were concealed by wax. But a sincere vase had no faults of any kind needing to be covered. So a sincere man is a genuine man, free from flaws, sound and whole in every respect.

But Paul's Greek adjective really means "proved in the sunlight." It suggests a type of character that can stand the strongest inspection. A cloth seen in the dim or in the artificial light of a store appears one thing. Take that cloth out into the sunlight and it is seen to be another thing. David seemed fair so long as no sunlight fell upon him, but when Nathan made him stand where the sunlight fell directly upon him, then David was no longer fair but foul. Judas in the shadow was a friend: Judas in the sunlight was a traitor. The sunlight is a revealer. When the sunlight of full scrutiny falling on motives causes those motives to appear brighter and purer, the sunlight reveals a magnificent character. It is this feature of Christ's life that is so unique: it was spent in the open, where men constantly saw him, and still not one of them all could find a flaw in His character. Even the man who betrayed Him was obliged to testify to Christ's spot-

lessness as he declared "I have betrayed innocent blood."

The men of today who, "proved in the sunlight," are seen to be pure and unselfish are the men who draw their families and their associates to Christ. Sooner or later the searchlight of inspection falls upon every one. He whose integrity and high-mindedness then become the more apparent, is the man who most glorifies the name of Christian and most adds power to the Christian Church.

This third petition asks that men be sincere and also, "without offense." An offense is that which causes people to stumble. If a stone or log or animal is in a pathway and people stumble over it, that stone, log or animal is an offense. In the olden time special roadways led to the "cities of refuge." The fleeing man who could reach one of these cities ahead of his pursuer was safe. Great attention was paid to these roadways. Everything that could possibly cause a runner to stumble was removed from them. The purpose was to make the way to salvation clear—without a single "offense" in it. To leave in the roadway one stone that would cause the runner to fall and so to fail of reaching the city of refuge was a terrible wrong.

So today it is a terrible wrong to be an offense to

any one on his way to the city of God. Good things left undone, as well as evil things done, may make us an offense. If our virtues are not bright, our very dimness may cause the ruin of others. The low burning of the lamp in the lighthouse has been known to wreck vessels. To be silent, giving no alarm when danger approaches, is to let our brother be unprepared for the danger. The man that is "without offense" is a great spiritual helper. To go through one's whole life never hindering one single soul from being better but the rather aiding many souls toward God and the joys of heaven, is an experience we may well wish for ourselves and may well seek for others.

"Till the day of Christ." Such is the ending of this petition to "be sincere and without offense." Some day the Master is to appear. All things then will be seen in His light. That light will search men's hearts and lives even as the sunlight has failed to do. Men shall be completely revealed to themselves and completely declared to others. Happy they who then—in the day of Christ—shall be seen to be "sincere and without offense."

Paul's prayer for the Philippians closes with the words, *"being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."*

These words constitute the fourth petition of Paul's prayer. They voice his wish that those whom he loves may have an abundant experience of the benefits of God's grace. "Filled!" Paul loved to use the words "full" and "filled." He sought the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his own heart and he desired that same full indwelling in the hearts of others. He longed to have righteousness the overpowering passion of men's souls. He prayed that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will and that their peace might pass understanding. His own spiritual experience was rich and deep. "That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God" was his desire for others.

Filled "with the fruits of righteousness." The fruits of righteousness are comfort and content, energy and sweetness, power and salvation. Filled with such fruits! The autumn time suggests the beauty of such an experience. When the mows are filled with hay and the bins are filled with grain, the time for harvest joy has come. All nations sing that joy, Russia and England, France and America. The fruits of harvest are glorious, so too are the fruits of righteousness. He who is *filled* with the fruits of righteousness has a heart filled with lasting happiness and a life filled with abiding strength.

"Which are by Jesus Christ." Yes, Jesus Christ is the source and means whereby these fruits enter the heart and life. And when once they enter the heart and life, these fruits are "unto the glory and praise of God." They cause those in whom they dwell to reflect honor on God. Men "filled with the fruits of righteousness" are living illustrations of the power of divine grace: they are God's epistles written to show the beauty of His service. On earth they are God's attractive ambassadors and then in heaven they are God's eternal "glory and praise."

In the history of Hamburg occurs the story of an intercession. The city was besieged. Days and weeks had worn on until the people of this city were in distress. The day came when it seemed to the commander that he could not hold out another hour. Heavy hearted he entered his garden. His armor had not been put off for many nights. As he walked through the garden he noticed the cherries on the trees. They were large, ripe, luscious. A thought came to him. Next day he dressed three hundred children of Hamburg in white. Then he loaded them with these cherry branches. When all was ready he opened the gates of the city and had the children walk straight toward the besiegers. The besiegers could not imagine what the procession

meant. Children in white, bearing branches of fruit! Was it a stratagem? They awaited the coming of the children. When they saw their innocency, received their fruit and learned the dire need of Hamburg, the commander's appeal to their mercy touched the hearts of the besiegers. Next day the besiegers moved away from Hamburg and the city was saved!

The prayers of intercession are seemingly weak means of good: but when we bring those prayers to God, as the children carried the branches, in love and in earnestness, those prayers are appeals that reach God's heart and secure the blessings that are sought. Well may we then pray for our beloved:

"THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND YET MORE AND MORE IN ALL KNOWLEDGE AND JUDGMENT,

"THAT YE MAY APPROVE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT,

"THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST:

"BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH ARE BY JESUS CHRIST, UNTO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD."

The Christian Worker's Intercession

In a village in New York state the following scene once occurred. The pastor of the church was to go away. All the families dwelling within two miles of the church belonged to his congregation. The pastor had labored long and faithfully among them. His life had been blameless. His preaching had been forceful. He had gone into the homes with interest and affection for all. Besides, he had spoken some word of counsel to almost every individual in the entire congregation. He had rebuked, encouraged, comforted and persuaded, according to the need in each case. On the morning of his departure he came to a rising ground whence he could see the church, the houses lining the village street, and the scattered homes of more than three-fourths of his people. There he turned and looked back. Then he stretched out his arms, lifted his eyes, and with quivering voice called upon God: "Blessed Father, this is the people I have loved. I have labored for them with my whole soul. I can

do no more. Do Thou take care of them, and bless them, and bring them one and all to Thy glory."

Then he looked once more upon all the homes where the old and the young, the thoughtful and thoughtless were, turned about and passed on his way.

That scene does not stand alone in the world's history. Abraham Lincoln once said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no other place to go." Thousands of earnest, faithful men, having used every means within their power for the spiritual good of others, have reached moments when no other resource was left them except prayer. "What more can I do?" a teacher of a Sunday school class often asks after he has put his whole soul into trying to make Scripture truths reach the hearts of his scholars. "What more can I do?" a parent often asks, after he has tried to live spotlessly in his home, and has spoken to his children with all possible persuasion of Christ's claims for their allegiance.

At such times there is but one answer. It is the answer given in Paul's example at Miletus. For three years he had labored in Ephesus. He had been manly, independent, and tender. He had worked with his own hands to support himself; he

had coveted no man's money; he had gone from house to house by day and by night saying the needful word and showing a self-denying, loving spirit. He had been a faithful friend and a faithful minister. He had testified by his life and by his lips to the beauty of Christ. He had—even with tears—urged people to leave sin and walk in righteousness.

But now his opportunity was over. He was to see their faces no more. He had done and said enough to enable every one of them to be a splendid Christian, at once a blessing to his fellows and an honor to God. Only one resource remained possible to him: that was prayer. He knew the absolute necessity for heaven's blessing on his work. He himself said, "Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase." Prayer was to him a refuge and a strength. Accordingly, on the sands of the sea shore, surrounded by the representative workers of the Ephesian church, he knelt down and lifted his heart toward heaven in petition.

What was the nature of Paul's prayer? We are not told positively. But we are told so suggestively that we feel sure its nature is indicated in the words of his farewell:

"AND NOW, BRETHREN, I COMMEND YOU TO GOD AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS

ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP AND TO GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG ALL THEM WHICH ARE SANCTIFIED."

The key-word of the prayer is the word "able." The word "able" refers both to God and also to "the word of His grace." "Able," "able," "able"—that was the idea in Paul's mind as he knelt down to pray for these Christian workers.

He commended them to God. What does it mean to "commend" a person to God? To commend to God is to hand over to God for His care and blessing. When Christ came to the final moment of His life He said, "Father, into Thy hand I commend my spirit." Thus He intrusted His spirit to God for His care and His blessing. If today a dying parent desired to make provision for his child, so that the child after his death should have proper oversight and protection, he would call to his bedside some friend in whose integrity, wisdom and loyalty he had confidence, and he would say to him: "Here is my boy. I want you to take him and do for him everything you can, so that all will be well with him. I commend him to you."

But is there any special reason why we should thus "commend" people to God? Are they in any particular danger? One thing Paul felt and felt

with his whole being—the exposure of every Christian to spiritual peril. He never complained of this peril. Nor on the other hand did he ever forget it. To Paul every man's soul was the battle field where Satan fought desperately. Life to him was not so much a game of chess which Satan plays with every youth, the youth's soul being the stake. Nor was it so much all sorts of frightful creatures, such as Bunyan saw, threatening every pilgrim's progress toward Heaven. It was more than these. To Paul human life was an army of actual evil beings who, well organized and well directed, had but one mission—the ruin of man's soul. They were principalities and powers and rulers of darkness—spiritual foes that were all the more effective because they were unseen, foes that, subtly infusing into the soul erroneous ideas, weakened its principles and persuaded it into evil. Paul never lost this idea from his thinking. To him all the influences of hell were in league against a soul's welfare. Therefore in the very spirit of his Master he kept urging men always to be on their guard. He exhorted them to realize that one single hour of carelessness might imperil their eternal welfare.

Nor was Paul wrong. It is just as certain as the fact of existence that the careless soul, even in the

Christian worker, is exposed to spiritual danger. In Ephesus there were persons eager to mislead those very people whom Paul had taught. These persons were ready to turn converts back to idolatry, to lure them again into the vices of Diana worship and to make them worse than they had been before Paul rescued them. There are such people in the world now. No words can be too severe to characterize them. "Grievous wolves" Paul called such people—"wolves" because they do not hesitate to take simplicity and deceive it, innocence and corrupt it, high mindedness and pull it down to destruction.

Once in Texas I saw brought into ranch headquarters the skins of eight little wolves. Why was anybody killing little wolves? Because those little wolves, left unkilled, some day would be grown. Then a band of them would find a bunch of cattle that was astray on the ranch plains. The wolves would surround the bunch, would select some special animal as their victim, and every time that in the "milling" it came near them, would bite at its flanks. At last the animal, weakened by loss of blood, would fall. A moment later they would be tearing it to pieces.

A wolf among young cattle is a fearful thing. A wolf among sheep is even more fearful. But a

wolf in human form among weak souls is the most fearful of all fearful things.

That minister in the New York State village looking back in his farewell saw the village tavern. There was the cheerful bar-room where many a parishioner had tarried, sometimes drinking too much, sometimes listening to low and soiled conversation. Again and again, after he had almost persuaded his parishioners to Christian earnestness, these parishioners had been drawn into the tavern. Somehow before they came out all their concern for the religious life had disappeared. That tavern was to him like a great wolf: it destroyed his sheep. Satan must have laughed many and many a time as he saw the change wrought in one short quarter of an hour in that tavern.

Wherever people go there are spiritual dangers. They may be as imperceptible as malaria, but as powerful. There are Congressmen who leave their quiet home churches to go to Washington. When they return home it seems as though the life-blood of their piety had been sucked dry. Let any parent know that tomorrow his child is to be placed in such surroundings of temptation as Joseph faced when carried to Egypt: let any friend know that tomorrow his companion is to meet the evils that are

waiting to ensnare youth, to mislead maturity and to deceive even age. Then if parent and friend love child and companion they will rejoice in "commending" these exposed ones to God's care.

It is because mothers and fathers love so tenderly and understand life's evil so clearly that they commend the child to God. They lay their hands upon the child's shoulder, look firmly into his eyes and say, "Go, my child, I ask God to care for you." Then they turn away and in secret shed tears of affection for the child as they kneel and entrust him to God. Oh for prayer, today, from hearts the world over, that shall thus "commend" each exposed soul to the protection and blessing of God.

There was one other feature of this prayer for the Ephesians. Remember that it is not the prayer of an inactive, easy-going Christian. It is the prayer of one who has put his very life-blood into efforts for others. Remember too that this prayer says nothing about health of body, nor safety of home, nor preservation of life. The prayer deals wholly with Christian character. After commending the Ephesians to God Himself, it commends them to His "word."

Paul had immense faith in the value of the Bible as a means of spiritual blessing. Lately a sermon

was preached in Trinity Church, Boston, on the subject of weak Christian lives, and upon religious indifference and doubt. Said the preacher, "People are coming to me every week and saying that they have lost their faith and that they have no strength of Christian convictions. They are university students, they are graduates, they are young men in business and older people in society. I ask them if they are keeping up regular attendance upon church services where the Bible is read, taught, prayed and sung. Almost invariably they answer, 'No.' "

The very familiarity of the Bible often detracts from the force of its message. Its words fall impotent upon the heart. And still the Bible, under God, has such a power in it that it may both protect from evil and also secure holiness. It is a word of "grace,"— that is, of love, undeserved love. The Bible as a "word of grace" is a provision by love and is an expression of love. It reveals to men that personal love which God has for each of them, the knowledge of which should make every human creature understand his unspeakable value in God's sight, and should summon him irresistibly from all discouragement and sin.

That "word" purposes to do two things for men. The one, to make them perfect men in this present

life; the other, to insure them perfect blessedness in the life to come.

The method by which this first purpose is to be carried out is noticeable. The word indicating that method is the word "*build.*" The Bible is to do for men exactly what a builder does when he erects a house. He makes his foundation and then by gradual processes of construction he erects a building. The advancement is not hasty. Jonah's gourd sprang up in a day, and perished in a day. But no building of worthy size and beauty, intended to last many years, can be made in a day. Years upon years must go into the building of perfect character. This process of building a complete man is slower than any other process with which we have to do. And still the very slowness of this process suggests that character thus formed is made to last, to last as it would seem, for an eternity.

But the Bible is "able" to accomplish this great result. Rightly used it is the means of transforming weakness into strength and even of changing death into life. If read superstitiously as a charm, or irreverently as an ordinary book, or formally as a matter of letter rather than of spirit, it becomes a hindrance to the soul. But if read aright it "builds up the soul in Jesus Christ and establishes it in the faith."

When the soul tests all views of life by the Bible's views, and when the soul is dominated by Christ's purity, self-sacrifice, and self-control, then the soul becomes stronger and stronger for duty, wiser and wiser for truth—sweeter, happier, and holier. The reverent heed of God's word secures firmness in principle and development in power.

Such continuous use of the Bible never fails of profitable results. To pray that people may hide the Bible in their minds and hearts is to pray that they may grow pure and useful. To give a person a Bible with the expressed or unexpressed prayer that it may be all that God designed it to be to that person is to pray that the person—little by little, but with all sureness—may be "built up" into a noble, helpful, attractive Christian.

Give the Bible opportunity and it will do its work. "Can you make a good mechanic of me?" the young man asked as he went to the master mechanic. "I can if you will do just what I tell you and will continue doing so for five years." "Can you make a singer of me?" the young man asked as he went to the singing teacher. "Yes, certainly I can, if you will listen to all I say and will practice what I say, for seven years." The hope of the master mechanic and of the singing teacher is in having opportunity.

Let the Bible have opportunity and the desired results are certain.

One thing else God and the Bible can do besides "building up;" they can "*give an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*"

During all those years when the Israelites of old wandered in the desert, they had a hope that sustained and inspired them. They looked ahead to a blessed land where wandering would be forever over and all the uncertainties of pilgrimage would cease. There each one of them would receive an "inheritance," a safe and happy spot, where, surrounded by God's people, he would have his perpetual home. The thought of that inheritance (God's gift reserved for them, His children and heirs) put courage and strength into the Israelites. It spoke to them of trial ended and of joy perpetuated.

The word "inheritance" passed from the Old into the New Testament. Christian writers used it. They gave it an enlarged meaning. With them it stood for the perfect and eternal blessedness which God confers upon His people when Christ's work is complete. "The inheritance among all them that are sanctified" is God's Heaven. But God's Heaven is the holiness, the peace, and the fellowship which

are the crowning possibilities of human life and whose sphere is the very presence of God. "Oh, God," prays the mother when her boy goes from home to the war, "Oh, God, bring my boy home in joy and safety." So the man who loves souls prays, "Oh, God, bring these souls to Heaven, pure and true. Guard them, keep them all through this earthly life, and at last, sanctified and worthy, welcome them to Thy home."

That is a prayer that may well be on our lips for all Christian workers. It is a request to God that the outcome of life may be eternal blessedness. As the owner of a vessel, when the vessel starts upon the ocean, may say, "I hope my boat will have a prosperous voyage, carrying its cargo in safety, outriding all gales and entering its port in peace:" so we may pray that men should live beautifully and at the end reach Heaven. Many a man has had this wish for his friend. The wish is a noble one—that the friend may live so worthily that God at the last will honor him with the crown of life. That is exactly what Paul prayed for the Ephesians and what we should pray for others.

God and His word are "able" thus to "sanctify" men. His word is a purifying power. Christ's incisive utterances concerning covetousness, hatred,

impurity and formalism condemn and humble men. Christ's gentle utterances concerning forgiveness and love comfort and heal men. Let the Bible do its perfect work, and men will be sweetened, enriched and even "sanctified" until the pathway of their souls shall run straight on to Heaven.

The editor of one of the most influential newspapers of New York City went one winter day into the hills of New England. Night came on while he was still far from his destination. The snow was deep. He lost his way. He could not tell which road to take. No one was at hand to guide him. He was helpless. No house was in sight. At last he detected a light far in the distance. He drove toward it. He found that it was in a school house and that a little handful of people were meeting there to pray. They were "commending souls to God and His word." They had tramped through the snow as best they could and were here to make intercession. He asked them the direction he should take. They gave it. He drove away and was safe.

That little meeting on the cold, snowy night, made up of people who had left their warm homes that together they might offer supplication to God, stayed in the editor's memory. When he reached the great city the meeting constantly asserted itself in his

mind. As he saw men giving large checks for charity he thought of it. As he studied the many beautiful efforts made for human betterment he thought of it.

One day he wrote an article for the daily issue of his paper, describing his experience on that winter night. He showed the whole scene, the hills, the snow, the lost traveler, the school house and the little band of interceding souls. Then in a conclusion that expressed his profoundest conviction, he said: "I believe that such meetings as that which proved light and safety to me are today the greatest power in the world to bring light and safety to the souls of men."

Best Requests for Best People.

In his own unique and happy way Spurgeon once described the difference between great and small intercessions. He said:

"It may be your prayer is like a ship, which, when it goes on a very long voyage, does not come home laden so soon; but when it does come home, it has a richer freight. Mere 'coasters' will bring you coals, or such like ordinary things; but they that go afar to Tarshish return with gold and ivory. Coasting prayers, such as we pray every day, bring us many necessaries; but there are great prayers, which, like the old Spanish galleons, cross the main ocean, and are longer out of sight, but come home deep laden with a golden freight."

In intercession requests do vary in importance. Some requests seek good things, some seek better things, some seek best things. Intercession for the best people should seek the very best blessings that can be asked. So Paul thought when he interceded for the Thessalonians. Their religious conduct was

of a noble order. They were people for whose spirituality and strength he always thanked God. He even gloried in their piety and wherever he went mentioned their goodness with the highest approbation.

He put his requests for these Thessalonians into this prayer:

"WHEREFORE ALSO WE PRAY ALWAYS FOR YOU,

"THAT OUR GOD WOULD COUNT YOU WORTHY OF THIS CALLING,

"AND FULFIL ALL THE PLEASURE OF HIS GOODNESS AND THE WORK OF FAITH WITH POWER:

"THAT THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST MAY BE GLORIFIED IN YOU—AND YE IN HIM,

"ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF OUR GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

The first request of this prayer is "*that God would count you worthy of this calling.*"

"This calling" is an inclusive phrase. It has to do both with time and with eternity. It expresses every duty of time and every reward both of time and of eternity, to which God invites the soul. It means the life of Christian service here and the life of Christian sanctification hereafter.

When Paul used this phrase, his eye was on the present and the future alike. In his judgment ex-

istence could be seen aright only as it is seen in the light of eternity. All things are not to continue as they are. "The day of the Lord" is to come and with its coming great changes are to ensue. All evil influences then will be overpowered. All good influences then will be established. The eyes of Christ are to search every heart. Every secret thing is to be uncovered. That which is impure shall be put to shame. That which is pure shall be honored. The "day of the Lord" at once will be fearful and glorious—fearful to the evil, glorious to the good.

When a man is asked to be a Christian he is asked to be ready for that day. This is his "calling"—namely, to so live in all lowliness, meekness, endurance and love as now to be the very best man he can be and then to be prepared for eternity.

There is no appeal that can reach the heart of man comparable to this "calling." It summons to the highest possible duties and it enforces the strongest possible virtues. The Christian is to be the very best type of man the human mind can conceive. Such he is to be now. Then at the end, in completion of character, he is to reign forever with God.

A man of this "calling" is especially honored. Great responsibility rests upon him. He is chosen to be God's fellow-worker in saving the world. He

is, too, the man on whom centers the gaze of all those heavenly beings who watch the spiritual struggles of earth. When his work is done, then comes his greatest honor—he is welcomed by Christ into the everlasting habitations of blessedness.

Those who are already started in this "calling" need our intercession. Good and worthy as they are, they still lack many graces. Spotlessness is not yet theirs. They are not doing for Christ all that they may do, nor are they being for Christ all that they may be. The best Christians are the most convinced of their deficiencies. Paul called himself "chiefest of sinners." The better he became the more he felt his imperfection. So felt the faithful centurion. "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof," he said. "Would God that I could better illustrate the beauty of holiness!" is the language of the truest Christian.

But there is a distinction between actually being worthy of the calling and being "counted" worthy of it. Christ selected twelve men to be His disciples. Every one of them had flaws in his character. Still he "counted" them worthy to represent Him. John Newton was not worthy to preach Christ. Nor is the mission-worker worthy to teach Christ. Nor is any soul-seeker worthy to call himself

Christ's ambassador. But God "counts" such men, imperfect as they are, "worthy," and He uses them to His praise.

It is a great honor even to be "counted" worthy of the Christian calling. There must at least be true penitence and true consecration in a person's heart, if he is to be "counted worthy." Every person thus penitent and consecrated God uses for His glory. But He will not continue to use such an one unless penitence deepens and consecration grows.

"Counted worthy!" That was a great compliment paid the American missionaries after the siege of Peking. When the siege was over, the United States Minister declared that during all the time of peril the missionaries showed such energy, skill and devotion that to them more than to any others was due the protection of the compound and the preservation of the besieged. Not one of these missionaries was without his individual foibles—and still every one of them behaved so well that he was "counted worthy" of the missionary calling.

Whenever any man is counted worthy of the Christian calling, he is an honor to God. The man who buys and sells in such a way that his fellows count him worthy of the Christian name glorifies God. It sometimes seems as though the greatest

request we could make for Christian people is that they may be "counted worthy of their calling." How rapidly would God's work advance if every Christian were reverenced by his associates! Would not the finger of scorn, now pointed at Christ's church, immediately drop—if the members of that church bore Christ's name worthily?

It is beautiful when a man already earnest becomes increasingly earnest,—when a soul already noble becomes increasingly noble. It is even glorious when a life commends Christ to the world increasingly—when that life's influence, like a mighty Amazon, accumulates volume at each advance. Well may we make the petition for all holy men of God, "Oh, that they may be more and more effective for Christ every day they live!"

The second request of Paul's prayer for good people is, "*that God may fulfil all the pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power.*"

This is a petition that all God's desires for the spiritual development of good people may be thoroughly carried out!

His desires for them are exceeding many and exceeding great. He desires that every sin and every worldliness be laid aside. He desires that their souls be absolutely pure and their lives might-

ily powerful. What God wishes is that the Christian should be both beautiful and strong, so Christly that men should behold in him God's likeness and that every life touched by him, should be enriched by his goodness. When Victoria was a child, the heir to a throne, her mother might often have said to Victoria: "If all my wishes for you are fulfilled you will be a true, pure woman, and you will be a wise, good queen." That mother's wishes for her child were many and large. She desired thousands upon thousands of blessings on her child. But how few and small the desires of any earthly parent for a child are compared to the desires cherished by God for those who are at once the children of His love and the heirs of His glory! "I will dwell in them and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." "I will also perfect that which concerneth them."

This petition that all God's desires for His children should be fulfilled, ends with the remarkable words "with power." The prayer is that these desires shall not be fulfilled weakly but fulfilled mightily.

There is nothing in the Scripture more thrilling than the word "power" as used by God in connection with His blessings. "Ye shall be baptized

with the Holy Ghost and with power," Christ said. In due time a man like Peter who was too weak to confess Christ before one person had such strength that he spoke fearlessly before thousands. Power! Men never cease marveling at it. They watch the ox-cart lumbering along the highway, and they recognize the life in it, indicated by movement. But when they stand beside the railway and see the locomotive come rushing down the track, drawing its thousands of tons and sweeping by with resistless speed, they say "This is power!" Life indeed is in the ox-cart, but life "with power" is in the locomotive.

When God fulfils His desires in men "with power" those desires are abundantly, gloriously fulfilled. Men thus blessed enter into the banqueting house of God and eat His pleasant fruits. They go forth in God's name conquering and to conquer. "My people shall be willing in the day of my power," God said. When "God's power" is manifested in willing souls, a little one becomes a thousand and a small one a strong nation. Before God's mighty movements in the heart all discouragement disappears. Songs take the place of sighs. "The base things of the world and the things that are despised, and the things that are not bring to nought

the things that are." Let God once fulfil His great desires for His people "with power," and the church will not have one weak member, nor will any Christian disciple be other than "a tower of strength."

Once, in writing to the Colossians, Paul explained the secret of his indomitable courage and his unfailing energy. He was speaking of the efforts made by him for the world's good. "Whereunto," he says of these efforts, "whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working that worketh in me *mightily*." In that word "mightily" was the secret of his robust character and of his effective influence.

When we ask God to fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith "with power" in Christian people, we ask Him to reproduce men like Moses and Daniel and Paul. We ask Him to make even stronger and better men than these worthies. Was it not "with power" that God raised Christ from the dead? If with that same power He today implants Christ in human lives, then Christians of shining holiness and far-reaching fervor will abound, and those who give irresistible testimony for Christ will be a great multitude.

Paul's prayer for good people reaches its climax

in the third petition. He prayed "*that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and ye in Him.*"

No greater, higher prayer than this can be offered. Here is the consummate petition of all petitions for good people.

This petition has in view both the present day of earthly service and that other day, "the great day," when Christ comes in glorious majesty, and every eye shall see Him.

To pray that Christ's name may be "glorified" in men is to ask much. The "name" of Christ is that by which Christ is known. Christ's name stands for Christ's kingdom and for Christ Himself.

The prayer is not that Christ's name may be glorified in the words nor even in the deeds of men. Many a man whose heart was evil has said kind words about Christ and has even dedicated churches to Christ. The prayer is that Christ's name may be glorified "*in you.*" It is a prayer for such holy character in Christian people as shall actually "glorify" their Master.

It is much to "glorify" anyone or anything that is great. Successful runners in the Olympic games glorified the city of their birth. Franklin when his

representations secured the recognition of France for the American Colonies glorified his country. Even so a man may glorify Him "in whose name every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth!" Such glory from man is Christ's highest glory.

Here is a fact of marvelous significance—the highest glory of Jesus Christ comes to Him from redeemed and sanctified humanity. Men and women that are true, pure, holy are His greatest honor. When the persecuting Saul became the preaching Paul, he became a glory to Christ. When today men live patiently, sweetly, helpfully, they too are a glory to Christ. Men may so live as to disgrace Christ's name. They can be so careless, so evil that they drag Christ's name in the mire. But when, like Robert Murray McCheyne, they spend their whole energy for the truth, the name of Christ is honored. When like Blaise Pascal, constantly subject to bodily pain, they live so patiently that their very voices are a benediction, that same name of Christ is glorified.

To pray that a Christian may bring glory to Christ's name is to pray that the Christian's heart may be so filled with the fruits of the Spirit that his home shall reverence his piety, that society shall

feel the moral omnipotence of his goodness, and that the world shall see in him, as in a mirror, the very reflection of the spotless Christ.

This culminating petition for Paul for good people concludes with a remarkable expression. It is, that *"ye may be glorified in Him."*

The branch has vitality and productiveness through abiding in the vine. The Christian has beauty and power through abiding in Christ. The branch is glorified when the vine, sending its sap into the branch, causes the branch to bring forth buds and clusters. The Christian is glorified when Christ, imparting His own divine life to the Christian, causes him to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. No glory that man can have is comparable to the glory of being a noble Christian. Learning, pomp, applause pale into insignificance beside goodness. When that goodness is Christ-inspired it is transfiguringly beautiful.

Macaulay wrote concerning ancient Athens: "Her power is indeed manifest at the bar, in the senate, on the field of battle and in the school of philosophy. But these are not her glory." Then he mentioned her literature. He described it as the wisest expression of her best men. He spoke of the comfort and inspiration that her literature

had given to the world. Then he said: "Her literature is her immortal influence." The "glory" of Athens was her literature. The glory of a man is his Christlike character. That which glorified Washington was his unselfishness. That which glorified Lincoln was his benevolence. It was not the power nor the position of Washington and Lincoln that glorified them, but it was their goodness. Not the houses, not the farms, not the wealth of our fathers and mothers—but their spirit, of love and devotion, glorifies our fathers and mothers to our hearts.

To pray that a Christian may be glorified "in" Christ is to pray that the very traits of Christ may enter into and possess his being. Glorified in Christ is to be rounded, purified, completed. A man or woman glorified in Christ is the world's highest, noblest product.

The day is coming when Christ will appear with His angels, in majesty. Then all who have lived godly lives shall be openly acknowledged. Angels seeing them will praise Christ for them and call them trophies of His love. Every John Bunyan will be an enhancement to Christ's glory. Every Timothy will be a star in Christ's crown of rejoicing. The nearer to God men lived, the brighter on

that day will they show forth Christ's glory. The more they strove to save Christ's world, the more will their contribution to Christ's triumph forever exalt His praise.

Can this great prayer for good people be answered? Yes, it can. We have every encouragement to pray it. The words with which Paul concluded this prayer assured him, as they should assure us, that God can answer it. Those words are, *"according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

That "grace" provided a plan of salvation. That "grace" brought Jesus Christ to earth. That "grace" opened blind eyes and raised the dead. It beautified a John. It rescued an Augustine. It has worked and still works all the wonders of regeneration and sanctification. No limit can be placed upon its power. It can change the vilest sinner into the holiest saint. It can take the heart of stone and make it the heart of flesh. It can implant in dying man the power of an endless life.

We may offer this prayer in confidence. God is glad to hear it and is ready to answer it. He bids us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. His followers are His human dependence. He wishes them to stand

among their fellows as Mt. Blanc stands among the mountains, white, pure, and towering. He wishes His church to put on her beautiful garments. He wishes her to be the salvation of the ends of the earth.

The very best people need our intercession. They are called by God to defend His interests, to show forth His virtues and to advance His cause. The largest duties ever devolved upon men devolve upon them. They are exposed to severe temptations. If they fall, great is their fall and great the consequent harm of God's name. If they stand, they accomplish much for their Lord. They appeal to us for our prayers, as Lincoln appealed to his neighbors for their prayers when, called to the presidency of the United States, he started from his home toward the national capital: "A duty devolves upon me which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He would never have succeeded except for the aid of divine providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same divine aid which sustained him, and on that same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support; and I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that divine

assistance without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain."

Let us then see to it that we so pray for these special ones that they shall answer to their high privileges and their glorious responsibilities. Our prayer for them is safe and wise when we pray:

"THAT OUR GOD WOULD COUNT YOU WORTHY OF THIS CALLING,

"AND FULFIL ALL THE PLEASURE OF HIS GOODNESS AND THE WORK OF FAITH WITH POWER:

"THAT THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST MAY BE GLORIFIED IN YOU AND YE IN HIM,

"ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF OUR GOD AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Intercession for the Unsaved.

It is an interesting fact that in the Bible there is not a single recorded prayer for the unsaved. There are many prayers, fully and explicitly recorded for "God's people," but not a single definitely stated prayer for the unsaved.

The explanation of this fact seems to be twofold. First, the epistles, in which prayers usually appear, are addressed to churches. The prayers in these epistles always deal with special features of Christian experience. The second explanation of the omission of prayer for the unsaved is that the Bible does not attempt to divide all men into two recognizable classes, labeling one "the saved" and the other "the unsaved," and then instructing each class by itself. The Bible addresses itself to all alike. It calls upon every person irrespective of his confession or denial of the Christian name, to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God. The words of Christ as given in Gospel narratives and the words of apostles as given in

apostolic letters, when heard in a church congregation, appear to be directed to every soul in the congregation. These words are so inclusive of all, that every hearer feels that they are intended for *him.* So it is that the prayers for the best people may be offered for any and all people.

It is true, however, that while no human eyes can detect unerringly who are the real Christians and who are not the real Christians, people do differ in their attitude toward Christ. He Himself spoke of two classes as existing in His day—those that were for Him, and those that were against Him. These classes always exist. Some persons are striving to follow Christ's will, and some are not. Some persons are "in Christ" and some are "out of Christ." Often it is difficult to draw a dividing line between these two classes. In this matter, as in many another matter, there is a "border-land" where people of different classes appear very much alike. Herbert Spencer speaks of "the indefinite border-land between the animal and vegetable kingdoms" where animals and vegetables are scarcely distinguishable. In the border-land between the saved and the unsaved no eye but that of omniscience can discriminate with absolute accuracy.

But when we move farther and farther away

from this border-land, in either direction, evidence becomes so definite that with much assurance we say of those on one side, "These certainly seem to us to be saved," and of those on the other side "These certainly seem to us to be unsaved." To God's eye there never is obscurity: with Him a man is always seen to be "for" Him or "against" Him.

The unsaved rest with great weight on the hearts of earnest men. As the original Greek expression seems to indicate, *the* desire of Paul's heart and *the* prayer of all his prayers was that men might be "saved." David Brainerd was similarly burdened with desire for the salvation of men. He traveled the forests and swamps of Massachusetts in dead of winter, kneeling in the snow and beseeching God to save the Indians. Asleep he dreamed of their salvation, awake his first thought was of their rescue. The absorbing love of souls that has animated some hearts cannot be exaggerated. The thirst for gold that compelled men to seek California and Alaska has not been so strong as that thirst which has caused Christian hearts to pray unceasingly for the unsaved. John Smith, the devoted Wesleyan preacher, used to say "I am a broken-hearted man, not for myself, but on account

of others: my God has given me such a sight of the value of precious souls, that I cannot live if souls are not saved. Oh, give me souls, or else I die."

Intelligent prayer for the unsaved should bear in mind that they need to be saved from their *unconcern.*

Monica's first thought was, "Oh, that my son, Augustine, may be awakened to a sense of his situation!" He seemed to her like a man asleep in a boat that is gliding to a cataract. He talked with the wise, laughed with the merry and companioned with the vicious. He frittered away his splendid powers of mind and body, seemingly unconscious of his fatal tendencies. Monica prayed that God would rouse him from his unconcern. In the old home in Africa she prayed for him. On the Mediterranean she prayed for him. In Europe she prayed for him. Sleep went from her!

Saved from unconcern! So many are going the way of death heedlessly. They eat, drink and play: they labor, they sleep—and all the while secondary things are the end and aim of their living. Many a man is like Jonah—not a profligate, but simply a deserter from duty. Jonah slept on that storm tossed vessel—disloyal as he was to himself, to his fellows and to his God. Above the storm the

shipmaster's cry was needed: "What meanst thou, O sleeper, arise and call upon thy God if so be that God will think upon us that we perish not." Jonah's safety was dependent upon an awakening. The first thing we must ask God to do for the unsaved is to make them *think*. In answer to Stephen's prayer God stopped Saul on his way to Damascus and forced him to realize his position. Thus God aroused him from his unconcern. The beginning of my own salvation was when the Holy Spirit brought me face to face with the questions, "What does Jesus Christ wish of you?" "Are you doing what He wishes?" It was when the prodigal "came to himself" and pondered his situation, that hope for his salvation dawned. The first step toward heaven is the step away from unconcern.

Prayer for the unsaved should bear in mind that they need to be saved from their *error*.

This thought was especially prominent in Paul's mind when he prayed for his own kinsmen. Their views of religion were wrong. They thought it impossible that a penitent so soon as he came to God could be forgiven and welcomed. They held that through prayers, tithes and sacrifices the sinner must work out his own perfection and thus make himself worthy of God's blessing. They were in

error. No one, though he lives a thousand years of effort, can ever, of himself, become perfect. For acceptance God does not require perfection, but penitence. God simply asks the soul to see in Jesus Christ the righteousness which God freely offers, and then to appropriate that righteousness.

There is widespread need of the prayer, "Save them from error." Missionaries in lands of idolatry need to have it on their lips daily. The people around them misconceive the nature of God and misconceive the methods of propitiating Him. As the missionaries realize the superstitions of the heathen they exclaim again and again, "Come, Lord, in Thy power and deliver the people from their blindness."

The prayer is equally needed in Gospel lands. Many persons hear the truth all their days and still remain ignorant of its meaning. I myself felt for years that to be a Christian would be to limit my freedom, not enlarge it: would be to diminish my joy, not increase it. God appeared to me to be a hard master. The service of Christ's cross seemed forbidding; the service of my own gratification seemed satisfying. Hundreds of others, like myself, need to be "saved" from such views. Satan is a jealous jailer. He holds fast many souls in

such beliefs as—that the faults of others are an excuse for their own deficiency; that ideals of conduct adopted without reference to divine revelation are all that are required; that cherished grudges are of small import, and that postponement of obedience to God is safe. All such beliefs keep people back from salvation: they darken the eyes of the understanding and often they lead lives into immorality.

But there is power in prayer to save from all errors. The father of John G. Paton knelt every night for years in the little Scotch home and made his intercession. "I have heard," wrote his son in his own autobiography, "that in long after years the worst woman in the village of Torthorwald, then leading an immoral life but since changed by the grace of God, was known to declare that the only thing that kept her from despair and from the hell of the suicide, was when in the dark winter nights she crept close up underneath my father's window, and heard him pleading in family worship that God would convert 'the sinner from the error of wicked ways and polish him as a jewel for the Redeemer's crown.'" "I felt," said she, "that I was a burden on that good man's heart, and I knew that God would not disappoint *him*. That thought

kept me out of hell and at last led me to the only Saviour."

Prayer for the unsaved should bear in mind that they need to be saved from their *sin*.

To be saved from sin is to be saved from its *guilt*, its *power* and its *corruption*. Sin is the violation of God's law. To violate human law renders the violator guilty. He is guilty until in some way his guilt is removed. He is not and cannot be a full citizen so long as his guilt remains. Nor can the man who violates God's law be other than guilty before God until in some way he is saved from his guilt.

It is fearful to be guilty before God. Guilt is cruelty toward God and peril toward ourselves Cruelty toward God, because it means wilful resistance to the most tender of all tender hearts peril toward ourselves, because were final judgment to be pronounced immediately, our guilt would be our condemnation. He who loves a soul that is in sin will pray that it be saved from sin's *guilt*.

He will pray too that it be saved from sin's *power*. The power of sin is seen in the drunkard His drunkenness is his master. In the morning he wishes always to be sober: in the evening he is again a captive to his drunkenness. So too with

the habitual thief, or slanderer, or backbiter: they are held prisoners by their sins. Many a sweet spirited person when asked to be a Christian replies "I cannot. My will breaks down every time I try."

Paul knew the power of sin. He exclaimed, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He felt that, like a man chained to a corpse, he was chained to sin. Sin hindered him. It hinders others—those who today are in bondage to impure thoughts, or dishonest practices or selfish ambitions. They need to have their chains broken and to be released from evil. Prayer was made for John B. Gough and he was saved from the power of drunkenness, for Jerry McAuley, and he was saved from the power of stealing. Prayer was made for Lady Huntington and she was saved from the power of worldliness. Prayer will avail for those today enchanted by the love of money or display, and for those held by the silken hawser of self-indulgence. A man is never free until he is saved from the power of sin.

Then there is the *corruption* of sin. Sin is a malaria in the soul: it vitiates taste, it weakens strength, it spoils appetite for good. Sin crazes

reason: it causes Barabbas to seem preferable to Christ. Under the corruption of sin men take "naturally" to evil. Unless that corruption is checked it, like leprosy with the body, pollutes the whole system. No one can check it but God. Even He can check it only by making of man a new creature—with a new disposition and a new purpose. This God is glad to do. "A new heart will I give you." This promise God has fulfilled thousands and thousands of times. Men who hated Him have come to love Him. They have been rescued from death and made alive in Jesus Christ. The faces that were set earthward have been set heavenward. Instead of becoming more and more corrupted by sin, they have been saved from all sin's disease and all sin's misery, and been brought to holiness and joy. Surely we do well when we pray for others, "Save them, O God, from the terrible guilt, the awful power and the ruinous corruption of sin."

Prayer for the unsaved should bear in mind that they need to be saved from their *alienation.*

The prodigal boy in the far country is away from home and fellowship. The prayer that he may be saved involves more than deliverance from wrong: it involves also adoption of right. It asks that the

boy may receive his Father's kiss and welcome, that the sense of God's love may flow in on his soul, that peace may be established between him and God, and that fellowship with his Father may be forever his. To be saved is to be delivered out of the life of evil and brought into the life of God, so that the sunlight seems brighter than ever before and the feast of the Lord is the strength of the soul.

Such salvation—of happiness, health and safety—is salvation indeed. The soul thus saved is at one with God, growing more like Him and becoming better prepared for God's immediate presence. It matters not whether the consciousness of such reconciliation with God comes to a man in a particular hour or comes in the course of years. It is enough that the man takes on larger strength and beauty, becoming increasingly loyal to Christ and increasingly satisfied with Christ's service. Not until Paul is ready to die can he say "I *have fought* the good fight." Nor may anyone expect that the process of salvation will cease this side of heaven. Every man must struggle and endure unto the end —to be fully saved.

But when that end comes and heaven is entered, then salvation is complete. Saved from uncon-

cern, God's servants see His face. Saved from error, they walk in God's light. Saved from sin, they dwell where there is no more curse. Saved from separation, they are forever with the Lord.

"Perchance in heaven, one day to me
Some blessed soul will come and say
'All hail, beloved! But for thee
My soul to death had been a prey.'
Ah, then, what sweetness in the thought
One soul to glory to have brought!"

Some years ago in Springfield, Illinois, an earnest man gathered about him a praying band and made this suggestion to them: "When you reach home this evening write down the names of all persons in Springfield whom you would like to have saved, and then pray for them by name, three times a day, that they may be saved. Then make your best possible efforts to induce those persons to turn to God for salvation."

There resided in Springfield at that time an invalid woman who physically was almost absolutely helpless. She had been bed-ridden for seventeen years. She had been for a long time praying to God in a general way to save a multitude of souls. When her family told her of the suggestion made to the praying band, she said: "Here is

something I can do." She could use her right hand. There was an adjustable writing table at the side of her bed. She asked for pen and paper. She wrote down the names of fifty-seven acquaintances. She prayed for each of these by name three times a day. She wrote them letters telling them of her interest in them. She also wrote to Christian friends, in whom she knew these persons had confidence, and urged them to speak to these persons about their souls' welfare and to do their best to persuade them to repent and believe. She had unquestioning faith in God. In her humble, earnest dependence upon Him she thus interceded for the unsaved. In time every one of those fifty-seven persons avowed faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

It is worth while to intercede for the unsaved. General Gordon always bore particular individuals on his heart. He prayed for them: he prayed for each of them. He entered their names upon a register. Affectionately, earnestly, wisely he entreated them to accept Christ's blessed salvation. By following this course, though he was in military service and in active enterprise, he lived to see scores of lives brought to God as the fruit of his intercession.

"Pray the largest prayer. You cannot think of a prayer so large that God, in answering it, will

not wish that you had made it larger. Pray not for crutches, but for wings." Yes, we cannot think of a prayer so large for the unsaved that God will not wish that we had made it larger. He *asks* His people to intercede in behalf of the unsaved. The unsaved are very precious to Him. Christ longs for their salvation even with travail of soul. Eagerly he awaits our efforts for them. For to us He has committed the ministry of reconciliation. Every heart then that is burdened with the salvation of a friend becomes companion to Christ and shares in His travail of soul. The honor of such companionship! It is admission to the holy of holies of Christ's heart. It is participation in His intensest passion. It is sharing in the greatest burden He today is carrying.

Surely when the days of earthly life are over and men and women enter heaven, they that on earth shared Christ's travail will in heaven share Christ's joy. Their previous experience will prepare them to appreciate that joy. Monica who interceded will, because she interceded, enjoy the more the triumphs of redeeming grace. So too will every praying soul that brought another life to eternal glory, have its own especial gladness and peace.

May God ordain a new band of men who today

and here being one with Christ in His travail for souls shall be the means, under God, of bringing many souls to Christ's perfect salvation.

And may you and I see to it that we enroll ourselves in that band and henceforth keep not silence day nor night as we intercede, with strong cryings and tears—for individuals—whom we name before God—for His gracious, holy and eternal salvation.

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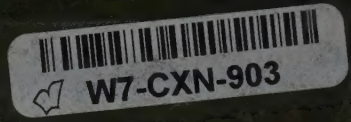
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